BIBLE TREASURY VOLUME 17

by Unknown

A collection of articles and writings from Bible Treasury Volume 17, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

220 Chapters

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Chapter 0

Bible Treasury Volume 17

1 Peter 2:24: Part 1

The true force of 1 Peter 2:24 has been called in question by those who seek not only to make Christ's life vicarious, but His sufferings during the time of His active service penal. The thought that all the sufferings of that Blessed One have infinite value, and that they were all for us, every Christian heart would close in with adoringly. There may be obscurity of mind connected with it; but the heart is right. But when intellectual proofs are attempted to be given to sustain unsound doctrine on this point, so as to undermine the true character and value of atonement, and to cast a cloud on divine righteousness, it is desirable then to maintain the truth.

I do not hesitate to say that those who speak of the appropriation of Christ's living righteousness to us for righteousness, and hold the sufferings of His active service to have been penal and vicarious, have, in no case, a full, clear, and scriptural gospel. I am sure many who, from the teaching they have had, hold it, are as far as my own heart could desire from the wish to weaken the truth of atonement and the value of Christ's blood-shedding, without which is no remission. They have not seen the deep evil lying at the root of a doctrine which speaks of vicarious sufferings, and bearing of sins to which no remission is attached. 1 am quite ready to believe that the most violent accusers of the doctrine which looks to the sufferings of Christ upon the cross as the alone atonement and propitiation for sin do not wish to enfeeble its value. But we may inquire into the justness of all views which we do not judge to be scriptural, and press too with confidence what we find in scripture.

I do not believe in the penal and vicarious character of Christ's sufferings during His active service; nor do I believe in the appropriation of His legal righteousness to me as failing in legal righteousness myself. I am satisfied that those who hold it have not a full, true, scriptural gospel. By some it is used for the maintenance of what is horribly derogatory to Christ. I have known many valued and beloved saints who hold that Christ, ender the law, satisfied, by His active fulfillment of it, for our daily failure under it. I believe this to be a very serious mistake, though I may value them as His beloved people still. I believe in His obedience to the law; I believe that all His moral perfectness, completed in death, was available to me as that in which He was personally agreeable to God, and a Lamb without spot and blemish. But these are not the appropriation to me of legal righteousness. Yet I am not now purposing to go over all this ground, but merely maintain the ground on which 1 stand, and the doctrine which I hold as scriptural, and as of immense importance to the church just now. I would do it meekly, patiently, that souls may be delivered from error and bondage into the liberty of the truth of God, which is the only real power of godliness; but I would do it firmly and constantly.

In the attempt to maintain the doctrine of Christ's bearing sins all His life, the translation of the text referred to has been called in question. I am satisfied that it is perfectly correct. As an element in this question, I would now examine it. The English version is, “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” A simple person would surely, in reading Peter, refer to His sufferings in death. Thus, in chapter iii., I read: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins; the Just for the

unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." No one denies that Christ suffered, during His life, sufferings which found their perfection in His death, besides the wrath-bearing character of it; for He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

But the question is, "Was there sin-bearing during His active service, or was He kept up as the Lamb to bear sin?" It turns on the word "bare," ■ν■νεγκε. It is alleged that if it meant "bare," it must be ■π■νεγκε or ■β■στασε or ■λαβε. All this is a Mistake. A sacrificial word is, I do not doubt, purposely used; but ■ναφ■ρειν means "to bear, or undergo," probably because sacrificial victims, which were offered up, were supposed to bear sins: at any rate, it does mean "to-bear, undergo, sustain." The truth is, determining the meaning of a word by etymology, in a cultivated language, is the most absurd thing possible. It is interesting as philological research; but as determining the usus loquendi, it is ridiculous. I might say "hell-fire" must mean "covering sins" (for it is the same word as "to heal," used also provincially for roofing)—for the same reason, hence, that the fire of hell was purgatorial or remissory! It did originally mean a covered place, hades, and hence, gradually everlasting punishment. ■ναφ■ρω does mean to offer in sacrifice; it means "to recreate oneself, to remember, to cough up, to return, to cast the sin on another, to weigh or consider," &c. The question is, Does it mean to bear, to undergo the pain and burden of? and, when used sacrificially, Can it be separated from the altar of sacrifice? I say it does mean "to bear, to undergo the pain and burden of anything;" and when used in connection with sacrifice, it cannot be separated from actual offering up to God.

First, it means "to bear or undergo." I must turn to the dictionaries for this, and the passages in which it is used. They leave no sort of question. It is only systematizing, and not the facts in the Greek language, which can lead any one to deny it. I turn to Stephanus. I find ■ναφ■ρειν, ferri, perferre, pati, ut Christus dicitur, ■νενεγκε■ν peccata nostra. (1 Peter 2:24; Heb. 9:28.) Citatur e Thucydide ■ναφ■ρειν quod durum sit reddere, Ferre pericula: potiusque verti debeat, Subire pericula (better "to undergo," that is, than "to bear"). The general sense of "undergoing the burden and pain of" is evident; and that is our point here. There is a reference in the beginning of the article to Aristides (I suppose, ■lit's Aristides, the rhetorician), which I cannot verify. So Pape, auf sick nehmen, ertragen, "to take on oneself; "to bear" κινδ■νους, Thucydides; φθ■νους κα■ διαβ■λους κα■ π■λεμον, that is, "envy, calumny, war," Polybius and Dionysius of Halicarnassns. He adds New Testament. Liddell and Scott give "to uphold, to take on one," Latin sustinere (quoting ■schylus (■χθος) and Thucydides). It is thus perfectly certain that the word means "to bear the burden of anything, to undergo." The etymological sense of "to bring up or back" is a mere absurdity here.

We have now to examine the scriptural use of it in connection with sacrifice, and in particular the passage in Peter. ■ν■νεγκε is a sacrificial word. It is used here (if we are to take it as it usually is taken, as referring to Isa. 53:12) for Hebrew nasa, which means "to lift up, to bear, to forgive," and here confessedly "to bear." It is alleged—for I have considered diligently what is alleged against it—that it cannot mean "to bear passively with" (al), a s would be the case with ■ν■νεγκε ■π■ τ■. This is a mistake. Aaron was to bear the names of the children upon (al) his heart (Ex. 28:29). So with the judgment, in verse 30.

It is said that Isa. 53:4, is translated ■λαβε by divine inspiration, and hence it could not be ■ν■νεγκε; in verse 12. But this proves, if anything (for the word may be translated differently in different places according to the sense, but if it be the Spirit's purpose to make the difference here, it proves this), that He would not use a sacrificial vicarious word in verse 4, but would in verse 12 (that is, that the “bearing,” in verse 4, was not sacrificial, but is in verse 12); for Heb. 9:28, that Christ was once offered ε■ς τ■ πολλ■ν ■νενεγκε■ν ■μαρτ■ας, are the very words of Isa. 53:12. So that, if this is of any value, it is not an inference, that it cannot be used in one place because it is not in another; and that Peter, if he had quoted it, would have used another word for “nasa” in verse 12, because Matthew did in verse 4 (an argument, when said to be from inspiration, which I decline characterizing). It is a direct proof that inspiration will not use a vicarious sacrificial word as to Christ's living sympathies and sorrows; but that it will and does use it when it speaks of bearing sins when offered up to God.

And now, leaving argument, which I am glad to do, what is the scriptural use of ■ναφ■ρω, in connection with sins and sacrifices, with or without ■π■ τ■? The following instances will show: Num. 14:34, κα■ ■νο■σουσι τ■ν πορνε■αν ■μ■ν. The use of it in this passage is the more noticeable: save in Lev. 20:19, the word always used for bearing the consequence of our own or a father's sin (and under the old covenant this is the same thing) is λαμβ■σονω in the Septuagint. In Lev. 20:19, it is ■πο■σονται. In Ex. 28:29, λ■φεται τ■ ■ν■ματα ■π■ τ■ λομε■ον, and for the same words in verse 30 it is κα■ ο■σει τ■ς κρ■σεισ.. ■π■ το■. Indeed, the argument as to λαμβ■νω may justly be carried much farther; For λαμβ■νω is regularly used for bearing the fruit of one's sin, bringing sin on oneself in its consequences. It is not bearing it vicariously, but as a consequence on oneself. The only apparent exceptions that I am aware of, and they are only apparent, are Lev. 16:22, the scapegoat; and Ezek. 4:4, 5, 6. But the first is λ■φεται ε■ς γ■ν ■βατον, “He shall carry them into a land not inhabited;” and in the case of Ezekiel, it was clearly not (nasa) vicarious, but representative (saval) and the same as the ordinary case. In a word ■μαρτ■αν λαμβ■νειν, is not used for vicarious bearing, but bearing the consequence of one's own fault, coming under the effect of it oneself, poenas luere.

(To be continued…)

1 Peter 2:24: Part 2

But what is important is to see the actual use, of ■ναφ■ρω, when used with sacrifice. Num. 14:34, and Isa. 53:11, are plain proofs that it is used for bearing sins penally. But now, as to sacrifice. The reader must bear in mind that the act of having the sin on the victim is not in itself the expiation. That puts the victim in the answering place; for the other, death and the judicial action of God must come in to put it away. It must be slain and offered on the altar; as it is said, “by means of death.” Christ had to take our sins on Him, and therefore die—give His life a ransom for many. Every one, therefore, believes He had taken them on Him before He gave up the ghost. The question is, Did He take them on Him in order to suffer on the cross, and suffer the penal judgment of them there; as the victim was brought up to the altar, then the sins confessed on his head, and then the victim itself, thus made sin, slain and burnt? Or was Christ born into this penal state, suffering it before He actually gave Himself up to be offered on the cross? Was He under the penal consequences of sin in the sufferings of His active service—was that penally from God? or in the sufferings of the cup He took to drink upon the cross from God? I believe the latter—that it was after the victim was presented as an offering to the altar (in Christ's case we must say presented Himself as a spotless victim to the cross) that the penal sufferings for sins were on Him, because our sins were on Him; and that it is to this bearing of sins alone that the passage in Peter applies. Christ offered Himself without spot to God. Jehovah laid then the iniquity upon Him. He Who knew no sin was then made sin. Did the Lord lay the iniquity upon Him before He offered Himself without spot, a proved spotless lamb? One Who knew no sin was made sin when He had bowed to His Father's will to drink that cup.

Offering in scripture, a double character. It is used for presenting the victim, or indeed any offering heevi or hikriv, “to cause to come nigh.” But ■ναφ■ρω ■π■ τ■ is not used for this, though in grammar I know not why it should not be. It is used for hard causes in judgment in Deut. 1:17, ■νο■σετε α■τ■ ■πε’ ■μ■ “Ye shall bring it to me,” but not for offering that I can find. If the reader takes Lev. 1, he will find for these words προσφ■ρειν or προσ■γειν, to bring up. This was the presenting the offering which was to be a victim. But as soon as the victim, or part of it, is spoken of as burnt on the altar (Lev. 3:5), then it is ■νο■σουσιν, α■τ■ ■π■ τ■ θυσιαστ■ριον. So in verse 9 the general idea of offering is προσο■σει hikriv, and in verse 11, the burning of it on the altar, ■νο■σει ■π■ τ■. And this is the regular use of it in Leviticus, and elsewhere, as Ex. 29:18, 25; 30:20; Leviticus 2:16; 3:16; 4:10, 19, 26, 31; 6:15, 26; 7:5; 8:16, 20, 21,27; 9:10, 20; 16:25; 17:6; Num. 5:26; 18:17. This last has the same force, but there is not ■π■ τ■ θυσιαστ■ριον. That is, ■ναφ■ρς ■π■ is the technical expression for consumption or offering up to God by fire, when on the altar, in contrast with bringing up to the altar. When ■π■ τ■ is not used, it has practically the same force when used of offerings—that is, offering to God: but ■ναφ■ρειν ■π■ τ■ has the proper peculiar force of bearing them as a victim on the altar, under the consuming fire of God, not of bringing up to. It answers to hiktir, not to hikriv. It is impossible that the use of language can be made plainer by the facts of that use.

There is another word for which it is used, which confirms this, hαla (Gen. 8:20; 22:2: so Ex. 24:5; Lev. 14:19, 20); where the reader will remark, comparing verse 13, that in both cases, of the sin or trespass-offering and the burnt-offering, they are killed before they are offered in this sense of the word. In Christ both went together; He died on the cross. But it is of importance to remark it here, because it shows that hala, as well as hatir, is not bearing the sins up to the altar, but the being offered (in consuming fire) on the altar to God. The word is used in some passages generally as a burnt-offering, an offering made by fire, the sense being assumed to be known; but this shows the strict sense is, the ascending up to God as a sweet savor, under the proving and consuming fire, not the bringing up sin to the altar. And this is so true, that as these burnt-offerings were of a sweet savor, so no offering not made by fire was a sweet savor. Compare Lev. 2:9, 12, determining the use of this word in the most positive way. They were to bring it up (takrivoo) as an offering but they were not to offer it (yahaloo) as a sweet savor, very justly, as to the sense, translated “burnt” in the English. It was not to be made to ascend as a sweet savor—that is, to be burnt and mount up to God as such.

The general use may be seen in Num. 28:2 and Deut. 12:13, 14; chapter xxvii. 6 is a proof that the notion of ■π■ τ■, i.e., ■π■ with an accusative (see below), is not so absolute, but proves that ■νο■σει, in any case, does not mean necessarily bringing up to, for here it is used with the genitive. Judg. 13:19, again, shows distinctly what ■ναφ■ρω επ■ τ■ means (here ■π■ τ■ν, because it was a rock); for it is added, “For it came to pass, that when the flame went up,” behaaloth, “from off” the altar. The victim was offered on the rock, and in the going up of the flame. That was what hala refers to, not the, bringing up to the altar.

Additional cases will be found in Kings and Chronicles, David's and Solomon's offerings; but it is only repeating similar cases, which confirm, but are not needed, to prove the point. The words for which ■ναφ■ρειν ■π■ τ■ θυσιαστ■ριον are used (namely, burning or causing to ascend on the altar), and the uniform use of them, prove distinctly that the force of the word is the bearing under consuming fire on the altar, and not bringing sins up to it. I may quote another proof, strongly confirming the use of this word in in 2 Chron. 29:27. Verse 24, the victim was killed; verse 27, Hezekiah commands it to be offered, ■νεν■γκαι ■π■ τ■ θυσιαστ■ριον. I add, on this occasion, it is never used for bringing or bearing sins up to the altar, it is used for bringing victims to the house; but this I quote because there it is not ■π■. The sins were not yet upon them; they were the spotless victims that were to become sin-bearers, and sweet savors of offerings made by fire.

■ναφ■ρειν ■π■ τ■ θυσιαστ■ριον is never used for bringing or bearing sins up to the altar; what it is used for has been fully shown. But the supposition that ■π■ with an accusative means actively bringing up to, and then rest, is a mistake. There may be grammatically the idea by implication that that which is ■π■ τ■ is not always and naturally there; but as a matter of fact, it does mean resting on a place or thing at the time spoken of. Thus Matt. 13:2, “All the multitude stood” ■π■ τ■ν α■γιαλ■ν. So Matt. 19:28, “Ye shall sit on twelve thrones,” ■π■ δ■δεκα θρ■νους. Acts 10:17; 11:11, ■π■στησαν ■π■ τ■ν πυλ■να ■π■ τ■ν ο■κ■αν. Winer's “Grammatik” (section 583) may be seen for this use of ■π■ with a genitive for motion. See a singular example in Lev. 3:5, the pieces of the peace-offering on the burnt-offering, ■π■ τ■—on the wood, ■π■ τ■—on the fire, ■π■ το■. This may be from the fire being always there belonging to the altar, whereas the wood was brought there: ■■σιν will be understood then before it. In many cases, I have no doubt that the real cause of the accusative is this; when the preposition of

the compound verb implies motion, there will be the accusative, though the whole sense will be rest. I do not think you would ever have ε■ναι ■π■ τ■. With ■φ■στημι, you will have the accusative; so ε■στηκε ■π■ τ■ in contrast with Christ's sitting in a boat on the sea; but Mark ■σαν ■π■ γ■ς. But this is grammar, and I pursue it no farther.

It remains only to adduce the cases of ■ναφ■ρειν, in the sense of bearing or offering. We have first Heb. 7:27, “who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice; for this He did once when He offered up Himself.” Now, here it is perfectly certain that it has nothing to do with the victim bearing sins up to the altar, but with what we have seen to be its usual and uniform sense—the high priest's offering it on the altar, where it was a victim. So, also, we have distinct proof that it is no vicarious life; for He did it once when He offered up Himself, and it was for sins. When, consequently, it may have a more general meaning of giving Himself up to be a victim, we have the word used for that in Leviticus, προσφ■ρω, Heb. 9:14. Hence we have in verse 28, “once offered [προσενεχθεις] to bear [■νενεγκε■ν] the sins of many.” Thus He was once offered, and offered to bear sins as thus offered, of which it is said that He had not to offer Himself often, for then He must often have suffered; but now He has appeared once in the consummation of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself: that is, His offering, His suffering, was the sacrifice of Himself. His being born was not His sacrifice. He offered Himself—One Who was a man, though by the eternal Spirit, or there could be no offering. That is, He was a man before He offered Himself, His own blessed voluntary act, the perfect act of Christ, though in obedience, and Himself already the spotless Lamb He was thus the Man, the spotless One, to bear the sins of many. This, there can be no doubt, refers to Isa. 53:12.

We have, further, James 2:21, “When he had offered up Isaac on the altar;” and 1 Peter 2:5, “Offer up spiritual sacrifices,” which give no proof; save that the last shows this, that it was the offering up to God, which is very important in this way, that it shows it was not the bringing up the sins, when laid on the victim's head, to the altar. The offering of the victim to God is προσφ■ρω. The consumption on the altar was its offering up as a sacrifice to God; this is ■ναφ■ρω. The notion of bringing up a living victim to the altar is unknown to scripture. The animal was slain when he had been offered (προσενεχθε■ς), slain by whom it might be, and the blood sprinkled on the altar, and the fat, or the whole victim, burnt. The altar had to do with death and the judgment of fire, and there was the sacrifice. A living victim bringing up sins to the altar is a thought foreign and contrary to scripture. When the victim had been presented, and the hands of the offerer had been laid upon it, it was slain at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Death was the way sin was dealt with in the victim (we know Christ's death was on the cross, as well as the full drinking of the cup of wrath); the thought of bringing sins up livingly, as if He offered Himself and His sins, is an impossibility. No; He offered Himself, and bare (■ν■νεγκε) our sins when offered (προσενεχθε■ς) as a dying victim. Death was the wages of sin.

Thus I return to 1 Peter 2:24 with the fall evidence of scripture and the Greek use of the word. All the scriptural order of sacrifice, and the language of scripture, confirm it, so that the simple-hearted reader may rest in all confidence in his English translation, “He bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” The word “bear” (■ναφ■ρειν) has a sacrificial character; but that no Christian reader ever doubted in this passage.

I do not see, I confess, how any scriptural location could be made more certain. I doubt that any other could have so ample and absolute a proof of its actual meaning, and refutation of the meaning attempted to be put upon it, and of the desired change in the Authorized Version. J. N. D.

(Concluded from page 111.)

Chapter 3

Abel's Sacrifice

If we take the history of the garden of Eden as a whole, we shall see in it a real whole, and in brief a complete picture of the ways of God. Man placed under responsibility and even under law was sinful, and an actual sinner; and he was driven out from the place of sojourn, where God visited him for fellowship. But God did not send him out to begin a new world away from Himself without giving the fullest testimony to the sovereign grace that has met the evil. Man's nakedness was the expression of innocence being gone. Shame and guilt, and a guilty fear of God's presence, were now man's state: God in sovereign grace met this. He clothed Adam with that which came from death, and His eye had His own work before Him. This did not say man was not naked in himself, but that God Himself, having taken knowledge of it in grace, had covered his nakedness. The present state was perfectly provided for in full, and the power of evil judged in the future. Hereafter the power of the serpent's seed would be destroyed.

But man, thus driven out from God, with innocence gone, began a new world; and the question necessarily arose, Can man have to say to God, and how? Now it is clear, that if God wrought in men, He could not for a moment be indifferent to what had happened; and still clearer, that God could not be indifferent to the state of evil which had brought man where he now was, and was expressed by what he was in sin and away from God. That which was the sad effect for man God saw as the evil state in him.

The driving him out of paradise had placed man in a judicial way in this place though not irrecoverably. He was in it morally, and the question arose: Could he approach God? Now he could not really, while insensible to the state he had got into; he would still be as far from God as ever; and in God's public government and testimony, God could not give witness to His so receiving him. And this is the new platform, of Cain and Abel—approach to God when in a state which was the result of being driven out from His presence. Do we approach God as if nothing had happened, in connection with the everyday circumstances, and duties of the place we have got into, or in the sense of the sinfulness of this state, the sense of our fall, and looking up to God in our consciences as those who have got these by sin? Every Christian knows. And here note, it is not committed sin, but the consciousness of our true standing before God. Cain goes with the fruit of his toil (man had been sent forth to be a tiller of the ground)—the actual practical state of man driven out. In Abel faith had its perceptions. Sin had come in, and death by sin: faith recognized it. “Now once Christ appeared in the consummation of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” This was not the clearing of the individual's sins actually committed. These are spoken of immediately after as a distinct subject, adding judgment, but a judgment passed for those that look for Him, seeing He has borne our sins Himself, Who becomes Himself the Judge (Heb. 9:26-28).

We have four worlds, so to speak, in this aspect: the garden of Eden; a world no longer innocent, but man departed from God and driven out where sin reigns and Satan; a world in which Christ reigns in righteousness; and the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. We have an innocent world (now gone) tested without evil in it by simple obedience. The final

world as based on righteousness, which in its nature never changes, cannot change in its moral stability.

But the moment sin had come in and characterized the world and the state of man, the terms on which man could be with God must be changed, because God could not change. That a holy God and a sinful creation should be on the same terms as an innocent one could not be. Free and happy communion would be impossible. Cry for mercy there might be—challenge on what ground he was there, but no free intercourse. That God is love does not alter this. His love is a holy love, for He is light; but “men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil” (John 3:19).

Now I admit and believe that the free sovereign self-originated love of God is the source of all our joy and hopes and blessings, eternal and infinite as they are. But God exercises that love by bringing in a Mediator in death: not here by bloodshedding to meet guilt, but in perfect self-surrender to God in that which was death, as such, and the fruit of sin. Fat was offered (Gen. 4:4) as much as blood, yet not offered as such for forgiveness but for acceptance in Another, Who gave Himself wholly to God in death which had come in. And mark this was that souls might approach to God: each came with his offering.

Cain came, as if nothing had happened, so much so that he brought to God, as offering, what was the sign of the ruined state into which he had got, but which he did not reckon as ruin. There was no faith in it. In Abel's there was. He offered by faith, which recognized that death had come in by sin, but that Another had given Himself for him, an offering made by fire of a sweet savor. For there are two things: “unto Him That loveth us and washed us from our sins;” and “Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” One was to clear foregone sins; the other, the value and preciousness of Him in Whom we are accepted— “accepted in the Beloved.” Now this was a question of acceptance in coming; and God did not accept Cain. He did accept Abel; but the witness was borne to his gifts. He was accepted, but God's testimony was to that which he brought, the life of another in all its energies and perfectness given up to God in death.

Another thing we have to remark here; it was not God setting forth anything to the sinner. That was “a mercy-seat (■λαστ■ριον) through faith in His blood.” Here it is Abel presenting himself to God, but coming by the acceptance and perfectness of another who had given himself for him. And this is propitiation. Now to say that God could receive a sinner as He received an innocent person is to say that God is indifferent to good and evil. And note here, it was not by the eye of God resting on an inward change that a difference was made (there was such a change, for faith was working in Abel's heart), but a judicial estimate on God's part of the gifts he brought, Christ in figure, Christ offered in sacrifice; and for this we have the express authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It was a propitiatory sacrifice as ground of acceptance; or the whole basis of the standing of a fallen world is gone—the whole moral basis of the preference of Abel to Cain.

That love, electing love, may have been there is admitted; but the ground of acceptance, as stated in scripture (see Heb. 11), is gone, if propitiatory sacrifice be not accepted. To win secure righteousness before God, and for the believer's acceptance, according to the value that is in Christ, He offered Himself absolutely without spot for God's glory. “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him.” Faith believed in it then and found its fruit. Abel was accepted, and

distinctively on the ground of what he brought—his gifts. Cain brought no such offerings; he had to be accepted in himself only, and he was not. Faith looks to this sacrifice, and finds acceptance and blessing according to the value of Christ in the eyes of God.

I only add now that God gave Christ to us for this end. He “sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” The self-originating work of love is in it, but the effectual work of suffering is to make good in righteousness that love. God forbid that I should weaken confidence in the Father's love. “He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.”

It is certain then, that, man being fallen, Abel sought God's face and acceptance by a sacrifice, to the value of which God bore testimony, “by which he obtained testimony that he was righteous.” It was a sacrifice which recognized death as come in, but which, as so presented, bore the character of perfect self-offering to God's glory. Not actual sins were in question, but the state of man and his acceptance on the ground of mediatorial death, in which God's own glory alone was sought on man's part in obedience, and in which the highest gift of grace shone out on God's part in love.

But here, immediately connecting itself with our subject, is another point, less abstract, narrower possibly in effect, but dealing more immediately with conscience, and hence of present necessity. If a man believes in heart (that is, as convinced of guilt) in the Lord Jesus Christ, he will not come into judgment; he knows he is forgiven and justified, he has peace with God, rejoices in hope of His glory, and trusts God for the road unto the end. “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity” —not that he has not done any, but that it has been borne by Another. Another has been substituted in his place by grace, Who has taken the charge of it on Himself, “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” It is not here the basis on which the race is before God, as in Abel's case, and which as a general principle recognizes the whole truth; but actual sins committed, which are dealt with and put away out of God's sight by One “Who was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5).

Now this, call it by any word you please, was One person put in the place of another, and then in such sort taking the sins and their consequences on Himself that they should not come at all upon the person, who was himself guilty, in judgment or penal consequences. Upon all who are not under this substitutionary benefit they do come, and with such God enters into judgment concerning them. For God's people it is said, “according to this time,” not what men wrought, but “what hath God wrought!” (Num. 23:21-23.)

Thus substitution is as certain a truth as scripture can afford; that is, one person standing in another's place, Christ bearing his sins in His own body on the tree, bruised for them instead of the guilty one, who is healed by Christ's taking the stripes. For “all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6).

Chapter 4

Abram Called and Worshipping

This chapter occupies a place of great importance, being the first public call by which a saint is separated from the world.

Genesis brings out the great principles of God's actings with those taught of the Spirit to know His mind: the God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob—not as the God of the whole world, though this is true, but specially of individuals. God is not ashamed to identify Himself with them. God is not ashamed to be called our God, because we are not of earthly but of heavenly calling. A time is coming when He will be God of the whole earth, when Satan is bound. Till then He is God of those called out to Himself. Abraham is the depositary of promise; Isaac is the son in resurrection; Jacob is the elect of God, type of Israel cast out and brought back again. Thus God gives the principles of His dealings with men (individuals having been called secretly before).

In Noah another principle had been developed: government for the restraint of evil. Then we saw the whole order of earth formed by families and tongues, after their nations and in their lands. After this corruption in a new form comes in. Man set up in responsibility fails now as before. It is the history of the world. There is the violence of men in Nimrod, and the rebel anion of men in the confederacy of Babel. But the more serious evil is that Satan sets himself up before man's imagination as the head of power by idolatry. The Gentiles worship demons. “The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not unto God” (1 Cor. 10:20). It was the delusion of ascribing to Satan under a creature form those things which God did. They “served other gods” (Josh. 24). Even the line of Shem was involved in this idolatry like the rest; but as Satan had thus introduced himself into heavenly places as an object of worship, God's people must be delivered from it. In order to effect this, God calls out Abram.

The chapter consists of two great parts: what Abraham was as blest in connection with God (ver. 1-9); and what his failure was when yielding to his own thoughts (ver. 10-20), of which last we do not now speak.

In the first part we have two things: God called Abram to come into the land; and then his worship in the land. “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.” This called for separation from all God's natural order of things. God did not say, Leave off worshipping other gods, but Leave thy kindred. So it was afterward even as to the Jewish system when Christ was rejected: God's religious order then had to be left. “When He hath put forth all His own, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice” (John 10).

God's ties hitherto were made by natural order, by family blessings and inheritances. Out of all this (not evil things only) is Abram called. This was the divine way of breaking the link of idolatry. The word is not, Correct your ways in the country of your birth where you are, but “Get thee out.....to a land that I will show thee.”

The law was given to Israel for the place where God was to keep them, as the role for them in Canaan; for, before, the Lord God dealt with them in grace, which alone brought them out of Egypt. The law was to direct them where they were to be afterward. But they broke it in the wilderness before they got it down into their midst; so that Moses pitched the tabernacle without the camp, and every one who sought the Lord went out.

Thus man ever fails; and there is nothing to rest on but God's revelation of Himself, the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. Well may we believe His word; seeing that by the word of God all things came into being and subsist. By His word the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water perished. The word of God is a necessary authority to the believer, who is under the responsibility of the obedience of faith. The ground of faith is “The Lord hath said.”

But even at first Abram could not get into the land of Canaan, because Terah was with him. Terah was not called, but, being the father, he took Abram.

Going thus Abram did not go in faith, and therefore did not get into Canaan. They came to Haran and dwelt there; but Haran was not Canaan. Thus nature cannot break from nature: only faith can. It is natural order once more, all within the limits of the flesh, and therefore outside the blessing promised. There is in this no faith in the word of God. Now nothing can set aside the immediate and personal responsibility of obedience to God's word; nothing must be tolerated between God and the soul, save His word. The error of the church in all ages springs from putting something else between. All divine means is to bring the soul to God. This is a simple principle God will never give up—the immediate claim of obedience to His word.

Nothing in nature is according to purpose. God has created, and will cause all to pass away: these things are all to be dissolved. But He never sets aside His purposes if His counsels stand. His will must surely be done. The gifts and calling of God are not repented of. He calls man to Himself out of corruptions and the lie of Satan.

Blessing is two-fold (ver. 2, 3): first to be recipients of blessing; next to be instruments of blessing to others. How good it is thus to be twice blessed—and the occasion of blessing. It is God's own joy to bring the lost into blessing as we see in Luke 15: 9-25.

But in Abram's case there was a hitch. He could not come into the land the Lord would show him while one link of natural ties remained unbroken. When Terah died, Abram starts afresh. “So Abram went as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls they had gotten in Haran. And they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came” (Gen. 12:4, 5). When Terah his father took Abram, “they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran and dwelt there” (Gen. 11:31). His father gone, Abram and those he took went with him; “and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.” Now the result followed.

There Jehovah, we are told, appeared unto Abram; there he builded an altar unto Him; and if he pitched his tent elsewhere, it was where he builded an altar unto Jehovah. It represents our being blessed in heavenly places in Christ, while the Canaanite is still in the land. Compare Eph. 6:12.

For we have to wrestle with spiritual wickedness there. Our bodies are not in heaven of course, but we are one with Christ Who is there; and there in spirit we are called too. Faith has to act on God's word. The testimony is plain. We are blessed in heavenly places in Christ. We are not of the world as Christ is not. Our conversation, our citizenship, is in heaven; in the world, but not of it; not in heaven, but heavenly, 1 Cor. 15. We walk by faith, not by sight. We are called to set our minds on heavenly things, not on things here.

It will be noticed that Abram's worship began with the LORD'S appearing to him. So it always is in principle. Faith takes God at His word and acts on it. The manifestation to Abram was the source of his worship. So the disciples, when they saw Christ going up to heaven, thereon worshipped Him; and ever after drew near worshipping Him in heaven, as they worshipped the Father. Worship supports a man in peace, and for us properly is heavenly, for Christ is there. Without Him we can do nothing, still less worship; and He has given us the Spirit that it might be real, and of divine character. Through Him by one Spirit we draw near to the Father. This is unfolded in Ephesians, which shows us manifesting to principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God.

If the prodigal came to his father, he ran, fell on his neck, and kissed his son. Yet this was not worship; but where is the house, the feast, the music and the dancing? These figure worship. What communion! We are called as knowing ourselves free for our Father's home above. He has revealed Himself in His Son that we might draw near there. It is one thing to be on the way to God; another to be there in Spirit, and at home there as already brought to God, Christ “having obtained everlasting redemption.” Then we worship. It is the same when the father kissed the returning prodigal, as when he had him within the house with the best robe and the fatted calf and the music and the dancing; yet how different man's state! We should be at home with God now, rejoicing in what the Father is in His own house, and not be occupied with what passes in our hearts, save to judge it and turn to Him Who is beyond all thought.

Chapter 5

Acts 20:1-6

It would appear from the Epistle to the Corinthians, that the tumultuous meeting in the theater was but one incident of a dangerous crisis at Ephesus. Certainly the apostle did not quit the city till there was a lull.

“And after the uproar had ceased, Paul having called [or sent] for the disciples, and exhorted and saluted [them], departed to go into Macedonia. And, having gone through those parts and exhorted them with much discourse, he came into Greece. And having spent three months, and a plot being laid against him by the Jews, as he was about to sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedonia. And there accompanied him (as far as Asia) Sopater, a Berean, [son] of Pyrrhus; and of Thessalonians Aristarchns and Seciundus; and Gains of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia Tychicus and Trophimus. These going before waited for us at Troas; and we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened [bread], and came onto them to Troas in five days, where we tarried seven days” (Acts 20:1-6).

In this passage, as in many others of scripture, we have a living testimony to the joints and bands which operated so efficaciously in apostolic times to preserve the saints in unity, fellowship, and love. There was no lack of missionary zeal; but, besides, the Spirit of God wrought much in the exhortation and encouragement of the saints. Thus was the body of Christ built up. It is here that we see the most manifest contrast of modern times with the primitive. If the converts are guarded from turning aside, it is in general the most that is attempted. Zeal habitually goes out towards the conversion of sinners, and those devoted to that work are regarded as eminently faithful and enlightened if they do not yield to superstition on the one hand, or to philosophy on the other. Growth in the truth is rare and practically unknown even among the teachers, not to speak of the converts. The consequences are deplorable: teachers and taught in these circumstances are ever liable to the many misleading influences around.

In these early days we see on the contrary the utmost care and zeal in visiting afresh those who had been already brought to God, and gathered to the name of Jesus. Nor was it only by oral instruction. That new and characteristic form of Christian instruction which expressed itself in the apostolic Epistles was now fully in operation. No composition admits of greater candor and intimacy; none gives such scope to the affections of the heart. It was from Ephesus that the apostle wrote the First Epistle to the Corinthians, as grand a development of Christian and church truth as was the Epistle to the Romans, written not long after as we shall see, on the great foundations of grace in justifying the ungodly, and on the reconciling of the indiscriminate gospel with the peculiar promises to Israel, as well as on the practical walk of the believer in view of all this.

There is no fresh inspiration going on now; but these two modes of seeking the edification of souls ought surely both to proceed. Preaching and teaching have a most unquestionable importance in reaching souls more simply and directly than any other; but there is an exactness as well as a fullness of treatment, which are best conveyed in a written (and, we may add, a printed) form.

There is another object also of great value attained in the latter way that souls can be reached thereby all over the world, most of whom neither could nor would listen to oral instruction of distinctive weight.

In these early days then we see not only the principle of both oral and written teaching, but the highest form of either ever reached on the earth. The apostles and prophets were the foundation on which the church was built. By the gracious power of the Holy Spirit they had immunity from error. It was not men doing their best, but God conveying His mind perfectly through chosen instruments.

Their writings alone constitute the Christian standard. Others at the present day may be raised up to recover what is forgotten, and to propagate this and all truth; the Spirit may work energetically by them, and give indefinite accuracy to their thoughts and words in unfolding revealed truth; but they are in no wise a standard. Their writings are not God-inspired; and, as they are not entitled to issue their convictions under the authority of “Thus saith the Lord,” for every or any word of theirs, so the saints are responsible to judge all they say or write, and still more what they do, by unerring scripture. Here then, after the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for and exhorted the disciples, and, after bidding them farewell, departed to go into Macedonia, the scene of his former labors. There too we find him passing through those quarters; and, after exhorting the saints with much discourse, he came into Greece. It was during the three months spent there that he wrote the Epistle to the Romans. He had long desired to visit Rome in person, but was hindered hitherto. Urgent duties detained him elsewhere; and God had it in His purpose that His servant should enter Rome only as a prisoner. It was not so that even the apostle would have ordered matters, still less the saints themselves. It is good however to learn and accept God’s profound wisdom in all these dealings of His. In weakness, and fear, and trembling, he at first testified at Corinth. After much danger and persecution he had left Ephesus. An ill-understood man, his deep spirituality and zeal ran athwart much prejudice at Jerusalem. He could only go at length to Rome with a chain. Such were the ways of God in the unequaled path and service of the blessed apostle.

Nevertheless thorough sobriety pervades the action of Paul. When there was a plot on the part of the Jews against him, as about to sail into Syria, he avoids it by adopting the resolution of returning, not from Achaia direct, but through Macedonia. The Jews had enormous influence in that great commercial entrepot, Corinth; and injury or death could easily have been, humanly speaking, inflicted upon him as a passenger in one of the numerous ships of that day. He therefore changed his plan and returns through the northern province. And there accompanied him Sopater, Pyrrhus’ son, a Berean, and of Thessalonians Aristarchus and Secundus, and Gains of Derbe, and Timothy, and of Asia Tychicus and Trophimus.

It was not merely therefore that the apostle labored in all directions. Here we find not less than seven companions in service, who were in no way restrained to one fixed local sphere. The presbyters or elders labored and took the lead locally. There were many others besides the apostles who moved about with perfect liberty, seeking the blessing of the faithful and the spread of the gospel. Of these laborers we may discern at least two classes. Some few attached themselves as much as possible to the companionship of Paul. Of these we have a sample before us. But there were others like Apollos who labored in a more independent way and enjoyed less of his society, though they had his entire love and confidence.

In verse 5 we learn of another deeply attached personal companion, Luke, the inspired writer of this very book. “And these having gone before awaited us at Treas.” Thus quietly does this honored man intimate that he too was with the apostle at this time and at Philippi. It will be remembered that it was in these regions that Luke had first become the companion of Paul (Acts 16:10-11, and so forth).

“And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened [bread], and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we tarried seven days” (vs. 6). Why the party did not move together, why the others went before, and Paul and Luke waited till after the feast, we can only conjecture. But we see the special association of Luke with the apostle and utterly reject the vain key to it that Wieseler suggests, that Luke traveled with him as his physician! If men cannot trace below the surface of the word with spiritual insight, how sad that they should exercise their wits in such degrading ingenuity! And will even saints learn how deeply the church is fallen when such thoughts are repeated instead of provoking indignation?

The delay of seven days furnished the ever desired privilege of partaking the Lord’s Supper together.

Acts 20:7-12

That the stay of seven days had a special and spiritual aim appears from what follows.

“And on the first [day] of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed to them, about to depart on the morrow; and prolonged the word till midnight. And there were many lights in the upper room where we were gathered together. And a certain youth, by name Eutychus, as he was sitting in the window, being overpowered with deep sleep, as Paul was discoursing yet longer, fell overpowered by the sleep, and even from the third story, and was taken up dead. But Paul went down and fell upon him, and clasping him round said, Be not troubled, for his life is in him. And when he went up and broke the bread and had eaten, and conversed with them a long while till daybreak, so be departed. And they brought the boy alive and were not a little comforted” (Acts 20:7-12).

There is no real difficulty or doubt as to the day intended. It was not the Sabbath or seventh, but the first, day of the week marked out to every Christian by the resurrection of our Lord. So we find the disciples meeting on that day, the first of the week—the very day that Jesus came and took His stand in their midst risen from the dead. So it was eight days after, when Thomas was with them and was delivered from his unbelief. It was the day of new, not old, creation, of grace and not law. There was no transfer from the seventh day to the first, nor is the first ever called Sabbath day; but as the apostles and others who had been Jews availed themselves of the Sabbath and of liberty to speak in the synagogue, so the first day was unequivocally the special and honored day of the Christian assembly. When they were all together from Pentecost and onwards in Jerusalem, we can understand their being day by day in close attendance with one consent in the temple and breaking bread at home. Here we find among the Gentiles, when time had passed over, that the first day called the Christians together as such. This is made the more marked in the passage before us because it is said that Paul discoursed “to them.” Twice over it is said that “we” gathered together. The constant duty for all the family of God as distinct from the Jews was to assemble on that day to break bread; the special object of Paul’s discourse was found in the saints who lived at Troas.

This is entirely confirmed by 1 Corinthians 16:2. “Every” first day of week let each of you set by himself a store according as he may thrive, that there may be no collections then when I shall come. “The first day” of the week was clearly a settled institution for the Christian body.

Not it but the Sabbath was the memorial of creation rest, which the law imposed in due time as a most holy commandment peculiarly bound up with God’s authority and honor. The resurrection of Christ has brought in a new creation, after having by Himself purged our sins on the cross. Hence it is the day of manifest and triumphant life in Christ, our life, when our hearts go forth in worship, communion and service. A bodily rest which one shared with the ox and the ass certainly does not rise up to the blessed associations of Christ risen from the dead, nor does the canon of the New Testament close without stamping this day as the Lord’s day (Rev. 1:10). Efforts have not been wanting on the one hand to make it a prophetic day with which it really has not one idea in

common, for “the day of the Lord” will be one of ever increasing and solemn judgments from God on the earth, whereas “the Lord’s day” is one of heavenly grace, bringing us into the victory of the Lord’s resurrection already, the pledge of our own resurrection or change at His coming.

On the other hand it is to lower the character and authority of the first day of the week beyond calculation, to treat it merely as the day appointed by the church. Thus neither creation nor law nor human arrangement had to do with it. It is a day marked out by the Lord’s repeated appearing, by the inspired sanction of the Holy Spirit, and by the final sanction of it as devoted to the Lord in the one great prophetic book of the New Testament; just as the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:20) alone shares as distinct from all other suppers the same striking and distinctive designation.

Again, some have sought to lower the breaking of bread here spoken of to the love-feast; but there is no ground whatever for such a notion. From the first, breaking bread was appropriated to the Lord’s Supper: so we see it from the beginning (Acts 2:46). It is there clearly distinguished from partaking of food with rejoicing and singleness of heart. Earlier in the chapter, verse 42, the breaking of bread or loaf refers solely to the Lord’s Supper. This is shown by its surroundings, the teaching of the apostles and the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers. These constituted the united holy walk of the saints. No doubt they had the most powerful influence on their ordinary habits and necessary wants of every day; but it is plain that the verse distinctly speaks of that which was most sacred. Nor is it denied that breaking of bread might be said of an ordinary meal, when the context so demands. So we find on a most impressive occasion where the Lord Himself taking the loaf blessed it, and, having broken, gave it to His disciples (Luke 24:30-35). It remains true however, that, where the context speaks of the communion in the breaking of bread, the Lord’s Supper alone is meant. So it is here; and in this most interesting way, the Lord’s Supper and the Lord’s Day were thus bound up together. It was no doubt a time when the assembly enjoyed the exercise of gifts, as here Paul discoursed to them, not “preached” as the A.V. says, which might convey the thought, of the gospel proclaimed to unconverted souls. Discourse is clearly a word of more general bearing, and quite as applicable to those within as to any without.

But the circumstances of this moment were peculiar. Paul was about to set out on the morrow, and extended his discourse till midnight. This gave occasion to the painful incident which befell Eutychus. It was not done in a corner; for “there were many lights in the upper room where we were.” The youth so named was sitting on the window seat; and being borne down with deep sleep, as Paul was discoursing at great length, he fell, overborne by the sleep, from the third story to the bottom, and was taken up dead. It must be acknowledged that the inspired physician who wrote the account was a most competent witness. It is not merely that he appeared dead, or that he was taken up for dead, as some have said. He was really dead, but Paul went down, fell upon him, as the prophets notoriously did of old, and clasping him said, “Trouble not yourselves, for His life (soul) is in him.” Assuredly the apostle in these words had no desire to make light of the power of God which had wrought in this miracle.

It may be well to compare with this Luke 8:49-56, where “the spirit” of the Jewish maiden had departed. But the Lord’s words were enough; and “her spirit returned.” Here it was not so: “his soul is in him,” said the apostle, though divine power alone could retain it or hinder the proximate breakup.

Some have supposed that when Paul had gone up and broken the loaf and eaten, it was the interrupted celebration of the Lord's Sapper. This appears to me opposed to the intimations of the context. Scripture describes it, not as fellowship, but solely as the personal act of the apostle. No doubt it was "the loaf" of the Lord's Supper; but it was that loaf now partaken of by the apostle for his own refreshment, after so long speaking and circumstances so trying, about to go forth on his journey. This seems borne out by the word, γευσ■μενος, rightly translated "eaten," or literally "tasted." We can readily understand therefore why the Lord avoids such a word in calling on His disciples to "take, eat," in the institution of His supper. The word φαγε■ν could be and is used in the most general way, but it is here γε■ομαι. Again, the apostle's "conversing" with them a long while, till daybreak, much better suits a meal than the assembly. So, we are told, he departed; as they brought the boy alive and were not a little comforted. The joy much exceeded the sorrow.

Acts 20:13-17

Such was the close of the visit to Troas. At this time the apostle appears to have been deeply impressed that his ministry, in the east at any rate, was soon to close. So he had intimated to the saints in Rome a little before, for he lets them know that as he had been hindered these many times from coming to them, so now that he had no more any place in these regions he hoped to see them (Rom. 15:22-23).

He was bent on his ministration of the contribution from Macedonia and Achaia for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. This done, his purpose was to go on by Rome into Spain, assured of coming to the saints in the capital with the fullness of the blessing of Christ. This deep feeling appears to have affected his ministry wherever he went. It was no doubt in the earnestness to which it gave rise that he had discoursed so long the last night of his stay at Troas.

But now the journey must be entered on. “But we, having gone before on board the ship, set sail for Assos, there intending to take up Paul, for so he had arranged, intending himself to go on foot” (vs. 13). Here was another effect of the same solemn feeling. There is a time for social intercourse, there is a time also for isolation; and the apostle who enjoyed fellowship of heart with his brethren as no saint ever perhaps equaled, realized that it was now a season to be alone. One can hardly doubt that this was by no means an unfrequent thing for one so actively engaged in public work as Paul. His habitual piety would dispose him now and then to seek such an opportunity of unburdening his spirit, and of renewing, in a marked and fall way, his sense of dependence on the grace of Christ. These secret dealings with the Lord were so much the more needful, because the exigencies of the work called for energy and prominence before men. At this juncture, beyond any question, we see that he had appointed to be apart from his beloved companions, who went on board ship, even though it involved his own more laborious progress by land. It is left for us to judge its motive and meaning, and we cannot but think that what is here suggested is a better key than the mere notion of a visit to one and another by the way. The general context rather adds to the conclusion that Paul was avoiding all but indispensable visits just then, and that having but a short time for his journey, he gave what time he could spare to the most important objects before his heart. Unnamed visits would scarcely have furthered this aim. “And when he met with us at Assos, we took him up and came unto Mitylene; and having sailed thence on the morrow we arrived over against Chios, and on the next day we touched at Samos, and [having remained at Trogyllium] the day after we came unto Miletus. For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost” (Acts 20:14-16).

There is no spiritual reason to dwell upon the associations which Assos or Mitylene, Chios or Samos, Trogyllium or Miletus might suggest. They are here brought before us simply as the varying points of the apostolic journey, from which it would divert as if we occupied our minds with historical questions interesting enough as to each of them.

Suffice it to say that, although Paul had his heart filled with that which was of the deepest importance for the saints in Ephesus, Miletus was the point of approach, rather than the capital of Asia. Here too the motive seems plain. Had he gone to Ephesus itself, with a strong affection, and the many ties he had with the numerous saints there, he could not have left them without a considerable delay. He therefore preferred to sail past Ephesus, that he might not frustrate the object of his journey to Palestine. If one so known and loved and loving as he was, had visited Ephesus, he could not have avoided a stay of some length among them. He therefore made Miletus his place of passing sojourn, in order that nothing should hinder the fulfillment of his desire to be at Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost.

On the other hand, it was of the utmost moment that the saints at Ephesus should receive words of wise and gracious counsel at this moment. The apostle therefore adopts a method by no means usual. “And from Miletus he sent unto Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church” (vs. 17). These presbyters were the fitting medium. They had the regular and responsible ecclesiastical charge in that city. We can hardly doubt from the general impression of the rest of the chapter, that they were not a few in number. As this does not fall in with the usual habits and thoughts (not to say, selfishness) of men, the notion slipped in even from ancient times that the elders of all the churches round about are meant. But such a tampering with the word of God is not to be allowed for a moment. The apostle sent to Ephesus and called to himself the elders of the church, not of the churches around. There may have been many meeting-places in Ephesus; but, as is well known, scripture never speaks of the assemblies, always of the assembly or church, in a city. Hence, however numerous, they are here styled, the elders of the church; and they no doubt cared for the affairs of all. Whilst local responsibility was also preserved in its place, unity was not therefore forgotten. Common action would be the natural and proper result. So it was in Jerusalem, as we know from the revealed notices of that assembly, which consisted of many thousands of saints; and so we see it here in Ephesus, though no details are given. The grand principles of the church prevailed and were the same everywhere, though at first there were Jewish elements at work in Jerusalem, if some of them indeed did not linger still. But such unity was of and for heaven, not of Judaism, being preeminently of the Holy Spirit. “There is one body and one Spirit.”

Another matter may claim brief notice here, though it may seem somewhat of an anticipation. The elders of the church are designated “overseers” or “bishops” by the apostle in verse 28. “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.” This identification falls in with every scriptural notice we possess. Such is the genuine inference from 1 Timothy 3 as well as from 1 Timothy 5, and still more plainly from Titus 1:5-6, compared with 7,9, as well as Acts 11; 14; 15; 16, and 21, and from 1 Peter 5 and James 5, no less than Philippians 1:1. The great distinction which soon reigned between bishops and presbyters is wholly unknown to the word of God. Not one, but more, were appointed in each assembly or city, where charges were conferred at all. There was regularly a plurality of elders and bishops. They might be men of gift, teachers or evangelists; but the indispensable work was to “rule” or “preside.” This was the object of their appointment; for appointed they certainly were by apostolic authority, direct, or indirect when an apostle could not be there (as for instance by Titus commissioned for the purpose by the apostle Paul). The gifts, on the other hand, were given by Christ without any such intervention. A pastor,

teacher, or evangelist, as such, was never nominated by an apostle or an apostolic delegate. The distinction from elders or deacons, it is well to bear in mind. “The seven” at Jerusalem, who rendered diaconal service, were chosen by the multitude of the believers, before they were appointed by the apostles. That this election by the church does not apply to elders is plain from every scripture that treats of their appointment, which lay exclusively with apostles or their expressly authorized deputies. Still less was there an election by men of those so-called gifts: in their case Christ chose. As Christ gave them, they preached or taught on their direct responsibility to Him. Where Christians gave of their means, they were allowed to choose dispensers in whom they had confidence. Such is the uniform teaching of the New Testament, and the only legitimate inference from it. The painful departure of Christendom, rationalists or dissenters, Catholics and Protestants, is so glaring that one only wonders how godly men can overlook the facts in the word which make the will of God manifest, or, how, if they apprehend them, there can be indifference to the truth and the inalienable duties it involves.

Acts 20:18-21

It is the more important to notice the fact that the elders were of “the church in Ephesus,” because the old error of Irenaeus reappears among other moderns in Dr. Hackett’s commentary on this book. “Luke speaks only of the Ephesian elders as summoned to meet the apostle at Miletus; but as the report of his arrival must have spread rapidly, it could not have failed to draw together others also, not only from Ephesus, but from the neighboring towns where churches had been established” (pp. 334-335). The truth is, that ancient and modern arrangements are alike inconsistent with scripture. Irenaeus was embarrassed by the prejudice of episcopacy, as were the authorized translators; but the plurality of elders or bishops from the church in Ephesus is not a whit more compatible with the “minister” of the dissenting bodies. It is certain that neighboring towns or churches are here wholly ignored, and that the presbyters of Ephesus only were summoned, and are alone addressed. Verse 25 is quite consistent with this. But it will be noticed that the apostle summoned them with authority, and that they responded to his call without question. To lower the apostle to the place of an ordinary minister is wholly unscriptural. “And when they were come to him, he said to them, Ye know from the first day that I came to Asia how I was with you all the time serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and tears, and temptations, which befell me by the plots of the Jews; how I kept back nothing of what is profitable, so as not to announce to you and to teach you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:18-21).

Here the apostle does not refrain from reminding them of his own service in their midst. This was a habit of his, as we see very particularly in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians and elsewhere; burning zeal and a good conscience before God alone account for it. Nothing could be farther from his character than liking to speak of himself. He calls it his folly in reminding the Corinthians of his labors and his sufferings; never would he have said one word of either, had it not been of the utmost moment for the saints. They knew very scantily what the glory of Christ demands, what the walk and service and devotedness of the Christian should be. They had been conversant only with the gross darkness of heathenism, or with the hollow and pretentious hardness of the Jews. They needed not precept only, but, what is so much more powerful along with it, a living example to form and fashion the ways of Christ. Unswerving fidelity characterized the apostle’s course habitually, as he says, “Serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and tears, and temptations which befell me by the plots of the Jews.” Such an one could well appeal to others who knew him, as he does now with peculiar solemnity to the Ephesian elders. It is not learning or success in ministry which he puts before them, but serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind. How often that service puffs up the novice! What dangers surround even the most experienced! Lowliness of mind is of all moment in it, and the Lord helps by the very difficulties and griefs which accompany it. Paul was not ashamed to speak of his tears any more than of the temptations which befell him through the plots of the Jews, the constant adversaries of the gospel, animated with special bitterness against Paul.

Further, he could say that they knew how he kept back nothing of what is profitable. This needs faith without which fidelity will fail; for the apostle was altogether above the fear of man, and withheld in nothing what was for their good, so as to announce to them and to teach them publicly, and at their houses, testifying both to Jews and Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Naturally the subject-matter points to his work from the beginning of his arrival at Ephesus, but also to that which every soul needs as the first testimony of the gospel. Hence we hear of testifying to Jews and Greeks. It is what man wants that he may come to God. Repentance and faith are inseparable where there is reality, and the language is as precise as we are entitled to expect from one who not only had but expressed the mind of God like the apostle. As there is no genuine repentance without faith, so there is no faith of God's elect without repentance. Repentance toward God is the soul judging itself, and confessing its ways as in His sight. Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ is the soul receiving the good news God sends concerning His Son. "Repent," said Peter on the day of Pentecost, to the Jews already pricked in heart who accepted the word and set to their seal that God is true. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house," said Paul and Silas to the Philippian jailor and to all that were in his house. How unfounded it would be to imagine that in the one case there was repentance without faith, or in the other, faith on the Lord Jesus Christ without repentance toward God! In a divine work both are given and found.

The Holy Spirit, Who works all that is good in the soul, takes care that repentance and faith shall co-exist. There may be difference in the outward development. Some souls may manifest more deeply the sorrow of repentance; others may be abounding in the peace and joy of faith; but wherever it is a true operation of God, there cannot be but both. We must allow for the different manifestations in different persons. No two conversions present exactly the same outward effects, some being more simple, others going through the dealings of God more thoroughly. It is well when the repentance toward God is as deep as the faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ is unhesitating. All then goes happily forward with the soul. But this is far from a common case. In most, as far as we can see, faith may be somewhat feeble, and consequently the soul is not a little tried with the sense of its sinfulness before God. In such circumstances self-occupation is apt to cloud the heart.

The spiritual eye is to be set on Christ as the object of faith, but with scrutiny of self subjectively before God, and hence comes a real judgment of sins and sin. There may not be peace, and there is not when this self-judgment with sorrow of heart begins; but faith in a God revealed to the conscience is surely there, though not yet rest by faith in the accepted and appropriated work of redemption. When Christ's work and God's grace are better and fully known, the self-judgment of repentance is so much the more profound. In this case the judgment-seat of Christ, however solemn, is no longer an object of dread. All is out already in conscience, and the flesh is judged as a hateful thing, and so evil really that nothing but the cross of Christ could be an adequate dealing with it; but there it is now known that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away (not merely our sins be forgiven), so that we should no longer serve sin; for he that died is justified from sin. As surely as death has no more dominion (sin never had) over Christ, Who, having died to sin once for all, lives unto God; even so we also may, and should, reckon ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. We died with Him.

Repentance toward God then is not the gospel of His grace, not is it remission of sins, but that inward work in the conscience by the Holy Spirit's use of the word, without which the privileges of the gospel are vain and only hurry on the soul the more rashly to destruction. The low views which make repentance a human work as a preface to faith are no less objectionable than the so-called high views which merge all in faith, making repentance no more than a change of mind. Neither legalism nor anti-nomianism are of God, but the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. Truth does not spare the flesh or its works; faith and repentance bow in self-loathing to Christ; and grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Repentance then is not mere regret or remorse, which is expressly μεταμ■λεια; μετ■νοια is that afterthought, or judgment on reflection, formed by God's working through His word to which conscience bows, as self and its past ways are judged before God. It is never apart from a divine testimony, and hence from faith; God's goodness, not His judgment only, leads to it; and godly sorrow works repentance onto salvation not to be regretted, as the sorrow of the world works death. "I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight"; "God be merciful to me the sinner"; such is its confession and cry in a broken and contrite spirit. The gospel, the good news of grace, is God's answer.

Acts 20:22-27

Next the apostle turns from his ministry at Ephesus to the prospect before him. He was well aware that the severest trials awaited him (compare Rom. 15:30-31), and, it would appear, with no slight presentiment that Jerusalem would prove the source of much that was imminently hanging over him. “And now, behold, I go bound in the (or my) spirit onto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Spirit testifieth to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me” (Acts 20:22-23).

Though he was not aware of the precise shape, he thus lets it be known that he went with eyes open to that coming pressure of troubles, which was only interrupted for a little while before all terminated in a martyr’s death. He knew further that, whatever might be the close, bonds and afflictions intervened; and what could be more serious for the testimony of the Lord and saints generally to the heart of one who loved the church? Nevertheless God was in it all; for during these very bonds he wrote the Epistles which furnish, we happily know, the fullest and brightest light of Christ and on heavenly things, which was ever vouchsafed for the permanent instruction and comfort of the saints of God. We shall see that loving remonstrances did not fail on every side, which must have added so much the more to his grief in resisting all appeals to the contrary.

Indeed the apostle here gives the pith of his answer to every entreaty and dissuasive. “But I hold not my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God “(vs. 24). Nothing could frustrate such a resolve. It was no question to him of success, as men speak, or of present effects, however promising. His eye was on the glory of Christ, his ear only for the will of God. Suffering or death as a sequence he would not allow to deter him for an instant. His Master had shown him, in the highest degree and for the deepest ends, how in a world of sin and misery suffering glorifies God. Undoubtedly there was that in the cross of Christ which belongs to none but Himself. The expiation or sin falls exclusively to Him, the Infinite Sacrifice; but sacrifice, though the deepest, is far from being the only element in Christ’s death. There were other sufferings which the saints are permitted to share with Him to be despised, to be rejected, to suffer for love and truth, as well as for righteousness. These sufferings are not confined to Christ, as it was to suffer for sin; and Paul perhaps more than any other was one who could rejoice in his sufferings for the saints, as well as fill up that which was behind of the tribulations of Christ in his flesh, for His body which is the church. The sufferings of the gospel also were for him to glory in; and no mere man before or since ever won so good a title of those honorable scars (Gal. 6:17).

Most truthfully, therefore, could he say that he made no account of his life as dear to himself: nor is it merely before the elders that he felt transport, or on any transient occasions of like kind. He had it before his heart to finish his course with joy, and the service which he had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the glad tidings (or gospel) of the grace of God. The large-heartedness of the apostle is as refreshing as instructive. Who had such a crowd of daily pressure on him? Who like him bore the burden of all the assemblies? If he had to do with weak consciences, who could be

weak like Paul? Who went out in heart toward one who stumbled as he did? Nevertheless the gospel was as near to his spirit as to the most earnest evangelist. There was no one-sidedness in this blessed servant of the Lord. He was here simply to carry out all the objects of His love, to promote His glory wherever His name penetrated; and Christ is not more the Head of the church than the sum and substance of the gospel.

It will be noticed that the gospel is here designated “the glad tidings of the grace of God.” This appears to be the most comprehensive title given to it in scripture. Elsewhere the apostle speaks of it as “the gospel of the glory of Christ,” where its heavenly side is meant to be made prominent. Again, he speaks of it as “the gospel of God,” where its source in divine love is pointed to. Furthermore we hear of “the gospel of Christ,” where He is in view through whom alone the glad tidings become possible from God to man. In the Gospels we hear of “The gospel of the kingdom,” looking on to Messiah in power and glory: in the Revelation, of the “everlasting gospel,” the revelation of the bruised Seed bruising the Serpent’s head. Each has its main or distinctive meaning; but as none can be apart from Christ, so none of them appears to be so full as “the gospel of the grace of God.” Nor is any other designation of it more than this last in keeping with the Acts of the Apostles, as well as with that apostle’s heart, who was now addressing the Ephesian elders. The person and the work of the Lord Jesus are fully supposed although not expressed in it; for in whom, or through whom, can God’s grace shine out, save in Him or by Him.

“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom [of God], shall see my face no more” (vs. 25). It is his farewell. His work, as to presence in their midst, was ended.

Here we have another and distinct topic, and one that is apt to be overlooked in modern preaching, “The kingdom.” He who examines the Acts of the Apostles will find how large a place it occupies in the preaching not of Peter only but of Paul, and, we may be assured, of all the other servants of the Lord in these early days. It is a grave blank where the kingdom is left out as now. Nor is it only that the future according to God is habitually lost to the faith of saints through the unfaithfulness of modern preachers, but thereby the gospel of God’s grace also suffers. For in that case there is sure to be confusion, which, mingling both characters, never enjoys the simple and full truth of either: for the kingdom will be the triumph of righteousness by power when Christ appears in His glory. A truth it was most familiar to those who were bred in the constant and glorious vision of O. T. prophecy. Christianity, though it open to us heavenly things, was never intended to enfeeble this prospect; rather should it enable the believer to taste its blessing more, as well by imparting a deeper intelligence of its principles, as by bringing in the heavenly glory. We can enjoy it in an incomparably larger and more distinct way; and we have its principles explained by a deeper and fuller view of its basis in the reconciling work of the Lord Jesus on the cross.

“Wherefore I testify to you this day that I and pure from the blood of all. For I shrank not from announcing to you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:26-27). The apostle could thus solemnly attest his fidelity to the trust the Lord had confided to him. (Compare Ezek. 3:18-20.) Twice at least (vss. 20, 27) he disclaims expressly that reserve which some bearing the Christian name have not been ashamed to avow as a merit learned from Him Whose death rent the veil, and Who puts all true followers of His in the light of life, the light which makes everything manifest. Walking in darkness, now that the True Light shines, is a walk in the flesh without God. With such no wonder that “the

hungry sheep look up and are not fed."

It is a mistake that "all the counsel of God" means no more than the plan of God in saving men unfolded in the gospel. "The gospel" is indeed the preaching of salvation in a dead and risen Savior; "the kingdom," whether morally or in, its tally manifested form, has its own distinct force in God's reign, as we have seen; "all the counsel of God" rises still higher and embraces His purpose in its utmost extent.

Acts 20:28

Having thus solemnly set before them his own ministry, he now turns to the elders and their work. “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Ghost set you overseers to tend the assembly of God, which He purchased with His own blood” [or, the blood of His own one] (Acts 20:28).

The first of all duties is to take heed to our own selves, whatever may be our position; and this an overseer is more particularly to weigh. For what can be more dangerous than activity with others and where there is carelessness as to ourselves? It is not from the word abstractedly, but from its shining on the path of our own experience, that most is learned practically. Undoubtedly we may learn from others, and through others; but how can there be reality, unless we take heed “unto ourselves”?

Still the object in appointing elders was to oversee the flock and all the flock. There might be, and in general were, several overseers; but the duty of the overseer is to take head “to all the flock” where he lives. This is the more important, as it humbles the spirit while it enlarges the heart; for who is sufficient for these things? It tends to neutralize the self-importance of “my people,” as well as the rivalry when one thinks of another, and “his people.” It was a new thing then; it is absolutely unheard of in modern Christianity. The saints had to learn that God had but one flock here below. There was unity whether in each place or all over the world. Yet the elders had to do with all the flock where they resided, not elsewhere. Eldership was a local charge. In this the elders are wholly distinct from “the gifts” (Eph. 4), which are in the unity of the body of Christ. They themselves of course were members like others, and as such consequently belonged not to “a body,” but to “the body.” But the office of eldership was within definite limits; the charge did not run beyond the particular assembly or city wherein they were appointed. It is admitted, nay pressed, that no one could claim to be an elder unless he were duly appointed; and it is plain from scripture that none could appoint save the apostles, or one positively commissioned by an apostle for the purpose. In other words the bishops, or elders (for they are identical in God’s word), depended for their due installation on an apostle, directly or indirectly; but when thus appointed, it could be said, as here, that the Holy Spirit set them as bishops or overseers; His sanction accompanied apostolic nomination.

The A. V. has gone a little beyond what the inspired word really says, “Over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.” It is rightly rendered in the R.V., “in the which.” They were thus made to feel that they were in and of the flock of God like every other saint. Nevertheless no one ought to deny that the responsibility of every elder was to rule. For, as the apostle says to Timothy, “Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching” (1 Tim. 5:17). They might not all labor in teaching; but they were all set to “rule,” or preside, and they were responsible to rule “well.” They were expressly appointed to the lead, as that which pertained to their office. They were in the flock, but in the Lord they were over their brethren, though they were by no means the only persons who were. This in no way

interfered with the gifts in the body. Some may be pastors and teachers, others evangelists; but both were on a quite different footing from the elders. The business of the gifted men was the ministry of the word, whether to those within or to those without; and they were accordingly to labor entirely apart from designated charge over any circumscribed or particular spot. Ephesians 4 is decisive for this principle and fact. It is not only that apostles and prophets had all unrestricted field of work; the lesser gifts, who were the fruit of Christ's grace to the church, had a similar title, though in a humbler way. Thus all gifts as such are in the unity of Christ's body; none of them is merely a local official (as we have seen the elder to be); though he might also be appointed to a charge, his gift otherwise goes beyond it.

The overseers then are exhorted by the apostle to tend or shepherd the assembly of God. Here again we see how strong is the contrast of scriptural truth with the system, which reigns to day, of this congregation for one "minister" and that for another. For of old the elders were all as overseers to tend the assembly; and here the whole of it in Ephesus. No doubt their duty was to carry on oversight where they resided; but it was to shepherd the church of God there, and not each one a part of it only. The largeness of the scriptural truth is as evident as the contractedness of men's arrangements ever since apostolic days. Men, in their wisdom, may have judged it necessary to allot a portion to this one, and another to that one in the same city; but earthly prudence, however respectable and useful for present interests, is ever to be distrusted in divine things. When in fact the breakup of the flock of God came to pass, the clerical order which had crept in could not but pave the way for not schisms only, but sects, each with their governing functionaries. So completely are the children of God fallen from His mind that the various denominations of Christendom are now supposed even by saints to be a providential arrangement, which only enthusiasts could wish to disturb. But as this is not the word of the Lord, so it is far from the path of faith. Human reason can never overthrow the plain, sure, and abiding revelation of God's will as we have it in scripture, the especial safeguard in the difficult times of the last days (2 Tim. 3), as the apostle tells us. Difficulties may be enormous, dangers increase, the trials be immense; but obedience is of all things the most lowly for man and the most acceptable to God. Let every believer weigh these things as in His sight: His will should be dear to all the children of God.

The apostle gives the more seriousness to the task which the overseers had before them, by the consideration not only that the assembly was God's rather than theirs, which it is never said to be (however common may be the word in man's mouth), but "which He acquired to Himself with" &c. "His own blood" is beyond controversy a difficult expression, and especially in the best representation of the text, which deserves careful examination. It is not meant that there is the least cloud over the truth that He Who shed His blood for us was God. If the Savior here was not God, His purchase would have only a creature's value, and must be wholly insufficient to acquire on God's part the assembly as it was, yea, is. Being a divine person, His gaining it to Himself by blood has an infinite and eternal efficacy.

But the expression, as it stands in the A. and R. Versions, is unexampled in scripture; and what is more, as already remarked, it is peculiarly embarrassing for the Christian scholar, because the form of it, now most approved on the best grounds, is extremely emphatic, instead of being general. Indeed it would be easier to understand the sense as commonly understood, if the form had been, as in the vulgar reading, το■ ■δ■ου α■ματος. The critical reading, though at first sight it may add to the difficulty, seems however the right one, το■ α■ματος το■ ■δ■ου. But it is

suggested that we should take το■ ■δ■ου in government rather than in concord. The meaning that results from this would be “the blood of His own One,” that is, of Christ, His Son, rather than “His own blood.” This if certain would make all plain.

It was in all probability the perplexity here felt which led some copyists in early days to substitute the church “of the Lord,” for that “of God.” But this reading, though externally well supported (A C D E, and more) is at issue with New Testament usage, and thus on the whole inferior to that of the common text, though as far as “God” goes no one need be surprised that Wetstein and Griesbach adopted it; but it is not so intelligible why Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles are not here found rather with Mill, Wolf, Bengel, Scholz, Alford (in all his Edd. since his 1st and 2nd), Wordsworth, Westcott, and Hort, who hold to το■ θεο■. It is Alford’s mistake that Matthδi prefers the same; for in both his editions he follows his Moscow copies, and has the same conflate reading as the Complutensian, το■ κυρ■ου κα■ θεο■; (C3HLP, some 110 or more cursives). Other varieties there are scarce worth noticing on any ground, as τ. κ. θ. (3. and more), τ. θ. κ. κ. (47.). Some ancient versions represent το■ χπιστο■, one old Latin “Jesu Christi,” and the Georgian—του κυρ■ου του χριστου.

Dr. Scrivener therefore fairly enough says that our choice evidently lies between κυρ■ου and θεο■, though Patristic testimony may slightly incline to the latter, as he does himself. But why he should consider that the usus loguendi of the apostle, though incontrovertibly sustaining θεο■ against κυπ■ου, “appears little relevant to the case of either,” is to my mind unintelligible. For the utmost that can be said for its immense weight on one side is that it may not have been impossible to have said the other in this sole instance. Scripture beyond doubt is larger than man’s mind; but assuredly he is rather bold or careless who could slight an expression invariably found for one never found elsewhere, and here easily understood to be a change in order to escape a sentiment extremely harsh and unexampled if taken as it commonly is.

It may not be without profit to conceive how the discovery of the Sinai MS., and a clearer knowledge, not only of the Vatican copy, but of other weighty authorities, must have modified, if not revolutionized, the judgment of Griesbach.

“Ex his omnibus luculenter apparet, pro lectione θεο■ ne unicum quidem militare codicem, qui siv vetustate sive interna bonitate sua testis idonei et incorrupti laude ornari queat. Non reperitur, nisi in libris recentioribus iisdemque vel penitus contemnendis, vel misere, multis saltem in locis, interpolatis. Sednec versionum anctoritate tueri se potest. Nulla enim translatio habet θεο■ praeter Vulgatam recentiorem, (quam redarguunt antiquiores libri latini,) et Philoxenianam syriacam, &c. Tandem neque apud Patres certa lectionis istius vestigia deprehenduntur ante Epiphanium, & c. Quomodo igitur salvis criticae artis legibus lectio θεο■, utpote omni auctoritate justa destituta, defendi queat, equidem haud intelligo” (N. T. Gr. ed. sec. 2:115, Halae Sax. et Lond. 1806) It is now certified, not by Birch only, who might have been more heeded, notwithstanding the silence of the collation for Bentley, but by the personal and expressly minute examination of Tregelles, who rather looked for an erasure, but found no sign of it in B, but Bea, as also in N. Now no sober and intelligent mind can doubt that the weight of N and B is at least equal to A C D E. Among the cursives, as usual, some may be of slight account, but others are really valuable and undeserving of so sweeping a censure. As to Versions, none can be produced of greater value than the Vulgate, and the most ancient and excellent copies, such as the Amiatine, Fuldensian, Demid.,

Tol., &c., as well as the Clem. ed., have “Dei.” It is rather audacious to begin with Epiphani us among the Fathers with the well-known allusion of Ignatius (πρ■σ ■φ. i.) which this verse alone can account for. Greek and Latin Fathers cite the common text, or refer freely to it (as Tertullian ad Ux. ii. 3, Clem. Alex. ii. 3, 44), though no doubt there is a vacillation which answers to the various readings.

Griesbach also argues on the improbability that Athanasius could have read the text as it stands and deny as he does against Apollinarius that α■μα θεο■ occurs, ascribing such an expression to the Arians; indeed many besides Athanasius objected to such language. And it would have been truly impossible if δι■ το■ ■δι■υ α■ματος had been the true reading. But it is not. The majority of later copies may support it, as they do the unquestionably wrong τ. κ. κ. θ., but all late critics agree to follow ■A B C D E, &c. It would appear then that the great champion of orthodoxy must have understood το■ ■δ■ου to be expressive of Christ, as God’s “own” One. Otherwise the emphasis, if we take το■ ■δι■υ in concord, renders the phrase so intolerable that nothing but necessity could justify it. Is there any such need? In other words, if the true text were δι■ το■ ■δι■υ α■ματος, we must translate it as in the Authorized Version and all others which were based on that reading now recognized as incorrect; and we could only then understand the phrase as predicated of Him Who is God by what theologians call κοινων■α ■διωμ■των. And Meyer considers that the true reading was changed to the common but incorrect one because το■ ■δ■ου), as it ought to be, might be referred to Christ. Doederlein, Michaelis, and other moderns, when they so refer το■ ■δι■υ, may have had low thoughts of Christ; but certainly not such was Athanasius, who, it seems, must have so understood the passage. Can it be questioned that the emphatic contrasting force, if we take it as God’s own blood, brings the phrase under what he calls the τολμ■ματα τ■ν ■ρειαν■ν?

It is easy to ask for justification by Greek usage. This is exactly what from the nature of the case could hardly be; for in all the New Testament, as there is no other instance of a noun followed by το■ ■δ■ου, there is no distinct matter for comparison. But it is to be noticed that, where Christ goes before, what follows is δι■ το■ ■δ■ου α■ματος (Heb. 9:12; 13:12). It is reasonable therefore to infer that, as the emphatic contrast would be dogmatically extravagant, the rendering most entitled to our acceptance is “through the blood of His own One.” Dr. Hort indeed suggests “through the blood that was His own, that is, as being His Son’s” (The N. T. in Greek, 2. 99). It may be doubted whether this will commend itself more than Mr. Darby’s. The general truth is untouched. The question is how best to solve the very real difficulty. The suggested version seems ranch less objectionable than Dr. H.’s conjecture at the close of his note, that via may have dropped out of the το■ ■δ■ον at some very early transcription affecting all existing documents. Conjectural emendation in New Testament scripture has never approached a proof of its need or value in a solitary example. He who gave us His word has watched over it; and we need not distrust Him here.

The reasoning of Bp. Middleton (Greek Article, Rose’s Ed. 291-5) is founded on the erroneous vulgar text, and directed mainly against Mr. G. Wakefield, whose version and notes are here as ever devoted to the confirmation of his heterodox views. But Michael is was not so ignorant as to translate the common text as the Bp. says he did; nor ought a writer on the Greek article to have overlooked an emphasis in the repeated article, as compared with the ordinary form, which would be hard indeed to predicate of God as such, when the unemphatic only is applied to Christ’s own

blood. It is to be doubted therefore whether Bp. M., or those who cite him in this connection, did really comprehend or see the conditions of the true question. For on the one hand the common deduction involves us in thoughts and expressions wholly foreign to scripture; on the other hand, if the Greek can honestly mean by the blood of His own One, the balance of truth is at once restored, and the utmost that can be alleged against the construction is that its seeming ambiguity might be supposed improbable for the apostle's mouth. That it is sound Greek to express this meaning will scarcely be disputed save by prejudiced persons, who do not sufficiently bear in mind the graver objections to the other version.

Returning then from the consideration of the passage, one may conclude that the Text. Rec. is right in reading church or assembly "of God," but wrong in following that form of expression at the close of the verse which would compel us to translate, contrary to all the phraseology of scripture elsewhere, "through His own blood." The reading of all critics with adequate information and judgment might, and ordinarily would, bear the same meaning with the force of a contrasting emphasis, which is never used even of our Lord: if said of God, it is wholly unaccountable. It seems that this moral improbability made Athanasius deny the phrase (found in Ignatius, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian) to be in scripture; which nevertheless has it, and has it in the most pointed form, if we are bound to render διᾶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου as scholars usually do, without speaking of the Oriental Versions, which cut the knot by giving "the Lord," "the Lord and God," and "Christ." But it seems only prejudice to deny that τοῦ ἰδίου may be as legitimately in regimen as in concord; if in regimen, the sense would be "of His own One," and the difficulty of the right text is at an end. In this case the apostle employs unusually touching terms to enforce on the elders to shepherd the assembly of God, which He acquired to Himself through the blood of His own One, special personality being merged in a purchase so beyond measure near and precious. That the Savior is the Son of the Father from everlasting to everlasting is certain to the believer; but the Book of the Acts habitually presents the truth from a broader point of view with which the apostolic charge would here coalesce.

Acts 20:29-38

Taking heed to themselves as well as to all the flock of God was the more necessary because of the sure and dark prospect which the apostle now puts before them. “I know that after my departure grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise speaking things perverted to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30).

On earth it has been always thus. So Moses warned Israel, when he was about to depart. Those under grace, we now learn from the apostle, would behave themselves no better in the house of God than the people under law. And so it came to pass, as the Old Testament shows us: Israel utterly ruined, everywhere dispersed, despised outcasts, no where more than in their own land; and so the New Testament everywhere warns as to Christendom.

The Lord Himself, in the great parabolic series of Matthew 13, sets forth its corruption from the beginning. The tares once sown were never to be rooted up until the harvest; and the time of the harvest will be the judgment of the quick on earth. So, in His great prophecy on the Mount of Olives (Matt. 24; 25), the Lord does not hide the sad future. The evil servant was to say in his heart, “my lord delayeth,”&c. and would begin to beat his fellow servants, as well as to eat and drink with the drunken. There cannot be, there is not, recovery, or general progress for good. Christ’s appearing in judgment will deal with the evil effectually. It is not otherwise in the beautiful picture of the ten virgins, five wise and five foolish. Was not failure apparent and complete, when all slumbered and slept, while the bridegroom tarried? Grace assuredly awakes the wise, who had oil in their vessels, to trim their lamps, and go in with the Bridegroom to the marriage. As for the foolish, who had no oil and are therefore busied here and there in procuring it in vain, the door was shut. So with the servants that traded with the talents given: nothing but judgment will rectify the wrong done to the Master. Not only is there to be no such thing as universal prevalence of the gospel, but within its own limited range of profession misrepresentation of Christ, and opposition to His will, characterize it to the last. No one denies that there will be, till He comes, as there ever has been, a witness of Christ and truth in life and suffering for His name; but there is also the sad and ever swelling succession of the evil done to that name, not merely by persecution from without, but still more painfully and shamelessly by every spiritual pravity within.

The Epistles entirely confirm and fill up the dark outline presented by our Lord. Of this we have spoken perhaps sufficiently elsewhere; but surely 2 Thessalonians 2 is the adequate testimony, and from an early day: 1 Timothy 4, and 2 Timothy 3 fall in with this preparatively. Peter in his Second Epistle (chap. 2), and Jude announce the same in yet more sombre colors; and none goes more to the root of the matter than John, not only in his Epistles, but prophetically in the Revelation.

Here however we have the inroad of the declension stated as a marked starting point. “I know that after my departure grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among,) our own selves shall men arise speaking things perverted,” and so on. There is much

unbelief as to this, even among Christians otherwise well disposed. They fail to see that the power of Christianity lies in the ungrieved guidance of the Spirit of God according to His word; and His Spirit can alone freely work in Christ's name to God's glory. When men act on human principles, where the spirit of the world prevails, ruin is the necessary result. As long as the apostle was here, the spiritual power and influence was immense. There was the most vigilant and the most decided resistance to evil of every kind. He knew that after his departure spiritual energy would decay more and more, and that the glory of the Lord would thus be swamped. So easy, so deadly, among the saints of God is compromise, to which amiability, prudence, desire of peace, love of numbers, and so on, would expose.

The commentators tell us that grievous wolves are not persecutors, but rather false friends. Real foes should enter in among those who bear the name of the Lord and spare not the flock. But the commentators are surely wrong in identifying the grievous wolves with those described in verse 30, "From among your own selves shall men arise speaking things perverted." Surely these are manifestly different classes of evil men, the first more violent, the second more subtle; the first seeking their own gratification and advantage, and the second doing the deadlier work of speaking things perverted to draw away the disciples after them. To take advantage of the flock for selfish means is wicked; to set up self and error in the place of Christ is yet worse, if more seemly in appearance.

Here it may be noticed that the Authorized Version fails to represent the malignity of the evil. Every party leader seeks to draw away disciples. Here it is the more aggravated effort to draw away "the" disciples after them. It was to mislead them all, to subject all saints to themselves. "Wherefore watch, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not admonishing each one night and day with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all that are sanctified" (Acts 20:31-32).

The ministry of Paul in Ephesus at this latter day was just an answer to what it had been among the Thessalonians earlier, first as nurse, then as father. It was for the elders now to watch and not to forget that loving example of love; but love will never abide, never bear the strain, without real faith in God for that work; and therefore the force of his "commending them" to God and to the word of His "grace." It is not to one only but to both. Without God before the heart the word becomes dry and sapless, and we grow discouraged and impatient; without the word to direct the life, we are in danger from the will and the wisdom, or the folly, of man. The word of His grace becomes the grand test and resource, while looking to God for every step and in every question. So we find the apostle laying it down by the Holy Spirit in 2 Timothy 3, which also, by the way, helps to decide the true reference of what has been questioned: should it be, "which" is able, or "who" is able, to build you up? The comparison strengthens the former.

The apostle had thus set before the elders a prospect most grievous, which lapse of time has only but fully confirmed. Indeed, before his departure the signs of coming evils were already everywhere apparent, so that when his later Epistles more especially prophesied not merely of decay, but of utter ruin, even then he had to speak of the seeds of these evils as already grown. No greater error than that which ere long began to prevail, and most extensively in modern times, the dream of progress. It is directly opposed to these apostolic testimonies, and no less to the plainest possible facts in Christendom. Even on the loose estimate of bare profession, how far is

the Christian faith from having title to that triumph of which men fondly speak? Indeed, if these vain hopes were realized, would they not present a glaring contrast to all that the Bible teaches us of that which is committed to human responsibility? From Adam downwards the history of man is the history of failure. Not that grace has not wrought, and wrought wonders, in the narrow path of Christ here below; but as the rule everywhere and always, ruin has followed every fresh trial of man, and every fresh testimony of God because of man. Look at him in Eden or out of Eden, before the deluge or since it: have truth and righteousness prevailed for the mass? That God has wrought by individuals, that He has blessed families, that He has owned righteousness in a people, as well as faith wherever His own grace made it good in the elect, is clear. As the race as well as head broke down, none the less did Israel, notwithstanding the singular favor which God showed; and as the people, so the priests, and so the kings, till there was no remedy, and God swept them from His land, not only by the Assyrian and the Babylonian, but still more by the Roman. That Christendom is no exception we have already seen, and this not from experience only, but from the distinct, and repeated, and complete testimony of the inspired men who laid its foundation; and yet men venture to hope— “to hope”! Is it that the apostolic words will prove untrue? Is it that men, so utterly fallen as they are now in Christendom, will do better than those in whom the Spirit of God first wrought with a power as much beyond consequent as precedent? But alas, poverty in its lowest state is apt to be the proudest. God will surely be true, and every man a liar who opposes Him. This then was briefly and profoundly set forth by the apostle about to depart from Ephesus.

Let me notice again how the ordinary translation weakens the force of the last words. It is not merely to draw away “disciples” after them: every heretic seeks and does this; but the object of the enemy through these perverse men is to draw away “the disciples,” the body of those that confessed the Lord on the earth. Not less was the blow aimed at the glory of Christ. He only is entitled to all the disciples, and if it is a serious thing for any disciple to be drawn away from Him, from His will about His own below, how much more to seek the misleading of all! But self will is blind to all but its own will, and soon learns to confound itself with the will of the Master. But think of the dishonor which is thus cast upon His name!

“Wherefore watch ye,” says the apostle to the elders, “remembering that for three years night and day I ceased not admonishing each one night and day with tears.” This little glimpse, which necessity wrung out from the apostle’s heart, lets us see his entire devotedness. It was not business, nor the spread of truth even, still less the prevalence of his own opinions for good. It was one who loved Christ, and pressed this above all on those who took the lead. Untiring, tender, watchful, care filled his heart, with the deepest feeling habitually and at all cost. Such he would have us feel, as those he addressed that day. Who is sufficient for these things? The sufficiency is in and from God.

So he continues, “And now I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all that are sanctified.” Whatever be the days of danger, difficulty, and ruin, God abides faithful, the Savior unchangeable, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever. If all the apostles, since they and the prophets laid the foundation, have passed away, the words of His grace remain, as does the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. He only had divine power even when apostles were there. There is no excuse therefore for unbelief. Faith shines the more in a dark day, and devotedness is called out by the

sense of His dishonor Who is dearest to the heart.

Nor is there anything in comparison with the word of His grace in ability to build us up. Boldness of thought and beauty of language are all vain, if there be not the truth; and the truth is never so sure, and strong, and holy, as in His own word, which is truth. This searches the conscience, this strengthens the heart, this nourishes faith and makes the blessed hope abounding and mighty in the love which is the strength of all that is good. For love is of God, and God is good, and as His word builds us up now, so it gives us the inheritance among all that are sanctified. The word of God truly received delivers from the love of this present age, from the world and the things of the world.

Hence adds the apostle, “I coveted no man’s silver or gold, or apparel; yea, yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities and to those that were with me.” Life in Christ is infinitely blessed, and it is the portion of the believer by the grace of God; a life wholly and absolutely different from that old Adam life, which meets its doom, not in death only, but in judgment without end. For the Christian our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be annulled, that we might no longer serve sin, so that each can say, “I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live I but Christ liveth in me, but in that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.” It is ruin no doubt to set aside the grace of God, as the re-introduction of the law must do. But how terrible to give a false unworthy testimony to the grace of God by allowing the desires of that life which should be buried in the cross of Christ. The old man covets silver and gold, or apparel. All these minister to the lusts of the body as well as of the mind. Love serves others, love with faith alone glorifies God; and it is well when those who teach these things are living ensamples of all they urge on others. How few can say truthfully and throughout with the apostle,” I coveted no man’s silver and gold, or apparel, yea, yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those that were with me. In all things I gave you an example, how that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:33-35). Then let no one who seems or claims to be a leader now forget them; yea, let us all remember these ways of the apostle and these words of the Lord Jesus. This is certainly not after the manner of men, nor yet of Israel, nay, nor of Christendom. They are the words of Christ, and His life here below is the most blessed comment upon them. It certainly is not enjoyment, or present honor, but His love in tending and feeding the sheep of His pasture, looking for the day of reckoning when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested, and the faithful shepherds receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Yet the account is not complete without the parting scene, which proves that faith in the unseen hinders not, but imparts, the love which is of God in this world of sorrow and selfishness. “And having thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and falling on Paul’s neck, fondly kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him forward unto the ship” (Acts 20:36-38). Such was the bearing of the greatest of apostles. Oh! how fallen from its reality are those who vaunt themselves his successors. How far short are any of us who abhor such pretensions! As truth and love receded, hierarchy in every shape made for itself a throne, as far from the mind of Christ as earth is from heaven. But let us beware lest love grow cold in presence of abounding iniquity.

Chapter 12

Acts 21:1-7

The public course of the apostle was closed so far as scripture informs us. The remaining chapters of the Acts are occupied almost entirely with the personal history of the apostle, especially his collision with the Jews publicly, and through them with the Gentiles. In the first and last of these chapters we have a little of his relations with the Christians. The book closes with him, the Lord's prisoner, in Rome, though not without liberty to see all who sought him, to whom he preached the kingdom of God and taught the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Considerably later traces appear in the last of His Epistles. It was important in the mind of the Spirit to give us the early ministry of Peter, chiefly in Judaea and Samaria, as well as in opening the door to the Gentiles. After that Paul fills up the entire scene to the close of the book.

"And when it came to pass that we were parted from them and had set sail, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the next day unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara; and, having found a ship crossing over into Phenicia, we went on board and set sail; and as we had sighted Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we sailed unto Syria and landed at Tire, for there the ship was to unlade her cargo. And having found out the disciples, we remained there seven days; and these said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem. And when it came to pass that we had completed the days, we departed and went on our journey, and they all with wives and children brought us on our way, till we were out of the city, and kneeling down on the beach we prayed and took leave of one another, and we went on board ship, and they returned home. And when we had finished the voyage from Tire, we arrived at Ptolemais and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day" (Acts 20:1-7).

Such is the succinct account of the voyage. On the day after (as we shall see) they took their land journey through Palestine; in the previous verses now before us, it was sailing. Nothing more simple; yet on the journey of such a man and his companions the Spirit of God loves to dwell, and that we should dwell. We wrong His grace in thinking that the Holy Spirit has only to do with extraordinary matters, as striking utterances, strange tongues, miraculous signs, and sufferings still more fruitful when unostentatiously borne. Undoubtedly He is the power for all that is good and worthy of Christ; but as Christ Himself lived much the greater part of His life in the utmost obscurity as regards man, perfectly doing the will of God, before and to Whom not a moment was lost, so does the Spirit of God enter into all the details of life in those who are Christ's. Surely if anything could give dignity to the passing circumstances of each day, this must; but do God's children, do we, believe it? If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit; let us not be vain-glorious, provoking one another, envying one another. Let us associate the commonest things with Christ's will and glory. Certainly there is nothing more closely approaching the animal than eating and drinking; yet the word of God would have us appropriate even these things to the highest purpose; and there is no way so simple and sure as by that faith which, looking upward, partakes of them in His name. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Thus shall we give no occasion of stumbling either to Jews or to Greeks, or to the church of God. Grace avoids questions, as it abhors sin and teaches us to please all men in all things, but not with

a view to one's own profit, but rather in divine love to the many that they may be saved. It was so Christ walked in the ungrieved power of the Spirit; it is so we are called to walk, though alas! we too often grieve Him. But there is no rule of life so true, so full, and so direct; and here therefore the path becomes of deep interest. "To me to live is Christ underlies what we are told of the great apostle." And when it came to pass that we were parted from them." The last verb may be softened down sometimes; but the natural meaning implies a wrench. Christian affection is a reality on earth: in all the narrative what an absence appears of turning aside for objects of natural interest! "We came with a straight course unto Coos, and the next day unto Rhodes." We may be sure from the character and the capacity and the attainments of the apostle, that he had an eye for natural beauty, and a mind for every historic association that presented itself here below. "But this one thing I do" was not more his word to others than his own life "to me to live is Christ." The claims of the new creation altogether outweighed those of the old. So when we saw him alone at Athens, with ample leisure to look around on the remains which have attracted men of the old world as well as moderns beyond most spots here below, what was the effect on him? His spirit was provoked within him, as he beheld the city full of idols. It was not sculpture that enchained him, nor architecture that blinded him. He measured all around by the glory of Christ, and yet none could show more tact in discoursing to them. If he probed their idolatry to the bottom, he availed himself of the least point of truth which the vain city confessed—the altar with the inscription, "To God unknown." Truly he walked by faith and not by sight: should not we? Is it really come to this, that, because we have not apostolic authority or miraculous powers, we are to abandon the life of faith? Is not the Holy Spirit sent down, and sent down to abide with us forever? It were humbling indeed to answer like the twelve men at Ephesus (who could not speak truly otherwise): "We did not so much as hear whether there is a Holy Spirit." If we Christians say so now, it is guilty unbelief of the sure and standing privilege of God's church. All we want is to judge ourselves and walk in faith, truth, and love: He will then manifest His gracious power.

"And having found a ship crossing over unto Phenicia, we went on board and set sail." It is good to notice the providential dealings of the Lord. The same heart that abides wholly unmoved by, the most violent and dangerous storm, ought to be thankful for a fair wind and a quiet journey; and so it was and is. Circumstances never create faith, though God may use unlooked for facts to deal with conscience. But the same simple faith it is, which, in rough weather or in smooth, can alike give thanks to God. Certainly it is not indifference; but the known will of God is always good, and acceptable, and perfect; and the heart is kept up in the confidence of His love. So His hand would be seen in their finding a ship crossing over to Phenicia. It would appear that the vessel in which they first set out did not proceed beyond Patara in the desired direction; and now, having found one bound for Phenicia, "we went on board and set sail." Thus in the outward but gracious ordering of God there was no loss of time.

"And when we had sighted Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we sailed unto Syria, and landed at Tire, for there the ship was to unlade the cargo." No doubt the term "sighted" is technical for mariners; but can we conceive that the apostle passed the island without recalling the scene of his early ministry, and of his elder brother Barnabas, and his younger, John Mark, whom they once had as their attendant? We have already had proof of the goodness of Barnabas, and the Holy Spirit has pronounced upon it; and it was proved at a still later day, when he left Antioch, from the midst of an active work of the Lord, to seek for Saul of Tarsus, and brought him to labor with himself at that

great city of Christian blessing. But Barnabas and Mark had parted from the apostle; yet the apostle's heart sought them both, and felt a love that rose above all their failings, as he proved, not only by word, but by deed to the last.

And surely Syria and Tire where they landed must have recalled deep reflections to the apostle. Here the Lord Himself had withdrawn daring His earthly ministry, and from those borders came to Him the woman of Canaan who drew out from Him, not merely an answer of mercy that she wanted for her daughter, but that praise of her own faith which will never be forgotten.

Here the delay of the ship was no less ordered of God at Tire than the finding it at once had been at Patara. The unlading of the cargo gave the apostle and his companions the time, not exactly to find disciples as in the A. V., but to find "out" the disciples. We cannot as in the Greek idiom say, "found up," though we do say "hunted up." It would appear hence that they were the object of search, not of casual discovery. They were the disciples, and "so they tarried there seven days." This we have seen before and remarked on, as giving an opportunity to spend at least one Lord's day for the communion of the Lord's Supper.

From an incidental statement we learn how full the early church was of the power of the Spirit. "And these said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem." Assuredly the apostle lacked not warning, as he said himself to the elders from Ephesus, "Behold, I go bound in the (that is, my) spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Spirit testifieth to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me." Evidently however the apostle regarded it rather as a note of danger that awaited him, than of personal direction which he must obediently follow. His own mind was made up, whatever the danger, whatever the suffering, to go through with it; as the Master had done in matchless perfection for His infinite work at all cost.

"And when it came to pass that we had completed the days, we departed and went on our journey; and they all with wives and children brought us on our why, till we were out of the city, and kneeling down on the beach we prayed and took leave of each other; and we went on board ship, but they returned home" (Acts 21:5-6). It is another beautiful peculiarity of divine affection—the family as well as social character of Christians in early days. This ought to be of great price now, if we are wise. In this cold world the saints are peculiarly exposed to grow chilly, if kept from fleshly excitement and worldly frivolity.

"And when we had finished the voyage from Tire, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we saluted the brethren and abode with them one day" (Acts 21:7). Here at a port called Accho in days of yore, now St. Jean d'Acre, they arrived; and though it was but for one day, how gladly they spent it with the brethren, for such there were at Ptolemais, apparently already known.

Acts 21:8-14

What we have see was the voyage of Paul and his companions; that which follows is their land journey. “And on the morrow we departed and came into Caesarea; and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him” (Acts 21:8).

The words of the inspired writer are full and distinct. From their precision one might think it impossible that any intelligent mind could fail to discern the person meant; yet no less a one than the father of ecclesiastical history contrived to misunderstand the verse, and to confound Philip the evangelist with Philip the apostle. It is no pleasure to point out a lapse so strange and unaccountable in an intelligent reader of scripture; but it becomes a duty to notice the error, and urge its importance as a warning to those who cry up the authority of patristic tradition. Indisputably Eusebius was neither better nor worse than most of the Christian fathers. For superstitious eyes he has the advantage of holding a decidedly early place amongst them; for he flourished in the days of the Emperor Constantine. No ancient MS. of the Greek New Testament that survives was written before his day; and but two can pretend to be as early. Yet it is plain that, with the text as it stands before him, he grossly erred, not on a point of nice doctrine, but in a plain matter of fact. For we are here told that the Philip, with whom the apostles’ party stayed, was not the evangelist only, but one of the seven i.e. one of the seven men appointed by the apostles for diaconal service during the days of first love, soon after Pentecost.

If the unquestionable meaning of scripture could be thus overlooked, and so serious a mistake find its way into his history, what confidence ought to be reposed in any alleged facts or statements outside the scriptures? Not that any evil object is imputed to that historian; but the circumstance proves that in those days, as in our own, there is deplorable ignorance of God’s word where one might least expect it. Patristic authority in divine things is no more reliable than modern systematic divinity. The value of scripture practically as well as dogmatically is incalculable. It is the standard as well as source of truth.

“Now this man had four daughters, virgins, who did prophesy; and, as we tarried many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet named Agabus; and coming to us and taking Paul’s girdle, he bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and deliver him into the hands of [the] Gentiles” (Acts 21:9-11).

The fact stated in the 9th verse deserves full consideration. Philip had four unmarried daughters, of whom it is declared that they prophesied; that is, they had the highest form of gift for acting on souls from God. Such prophesying was yet more than teaching or preaching. We cannot doubt, therefore, that they used their gift on the one hand; and on the other that it was forbidden to use it in the assembly. “It is shameful,” had Paul written in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 14:34-35), “for a woman to speak in [the] assembly.” At Corinth it seems that some were bold enough to attempt this and other innovations; but it also seems to have been at that time a very unusual and unheard of notion. In general, Christian women understood their place better in these

early days. Still there might arise some such desire here or there. At any rate the apostle felt it necessary in his First Epistle to Timothy to write (chap. ii. 12), “I permit not a woman to teach, nor to exercise authority over a man, but to be in quietness.” The word α■θεντε■ν does not convey the “usurpation,” but the possession or exercise, of power, where it does not mean committing murder. The woman is not set in authority, nor is she to act as if she were. As to this there can be no dispute for subject minds. “If any one thinketh himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize the things which I write unto you, that it is the commandment of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37). The Lord’s will is on record unmistakably, if indeed we respect scripture.

But these maiden daughters of Philip did prophesy, if not in the assembly, somewhere else. Decorum would have forbidden it still more in public, if God’s order prohibited it for the assembly. No place can be conceived more suitable than one’s father’s house. 1 Corinthians 11 renders it plain that the woman, in praying or prophesying, was to see that she bore the mark of subjection; for even in prophesying she must not forget she is a woman, and that the head of the woman is the man, as the head of every man is Christ. The woman, therefore, should be veiled, while the man was not so to be. “Every man praying or prophesying, having [anything] on his head dishonoureth his head; but every woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered dishonoureth her own head, for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven. For if the woman is not covered,” says the apostle, “let her also be shorn; but if it is a shame to a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered; for a man indeed ought not to have his head covered, being God’s image and glory; but woman is man’s glory.” Both have their place respectively in the Lord, Who, if He give power, maintains order no less; but each has a place He has assigned of its own, as all things are of God. So His word regulates all; and we should remember this the more in days when man’s voice is loud, and God’s word exposed and subjected to increasing slight.

We are not told whether these maidens predicted anything about Paul; but we do hear that Agabus the prophet added to the warnings already given by others. Not only so, but, he came and took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, “Thus saith the Holy Spirit, The man to whom this girdle belongs shall the Jews thus bind in Jerusalem, and deliver him up into the hands of the Gentiles.” It was quite in the symbolic manner of the ancient prophets; and it filled those who beheld and listened with sorrow for the honored apostle. “And when we heard these things, both we and those of the place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem; then Paul answered, Why do ye weep and break my heart? For I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done” (Acts 21:12-14).

It is clear that the apostle did not understand that the Lord meant him to turn from Jerusalem. He only heard reiterated by Agabus, as he had been so often warned by others, what he must suffer there. Indeed from his conversion it was intimated how many things he must suffer for the Lord’s name’s sake. Paul clearly must have concluded that the Holy Spirit spoke, not to dissuade him from his perilous path, but rather to prepare him in it—certainly for prison, and perhaps death. The brotherly kindness of others would have screened him from all that was to await him in Jerusalem; but love goes beyond brotherly kindness. So it was working in the servant, as with all perfection in the Master.

Acts 21:15-20

The apostle now passes on to that city which had so large a part in his affections, or at least the saints there, little as it might be conceived by those who saw in him only the apostle of the uncircumcision. “And after these days we took up (or made ready) our baggage, and went up to Jerusalem” (Acts 21:15). “Our carriages” would convey a mistaken impression to ears familiar with modern English only. It is possible that at the time of our Authorized Version, the word was used in a double sense, as has been suggested; not only as now for the vehicle which carries, but also for what was carried in it. The Old Testament likewise contains the word in its old meaning, which of course is found in profane writers of that day also. “And there went with us also (certain) disciples from Caesarea, bringing one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge” (vs. 16). An “old” disciple is certainly not exact, and may not even be true, ■ρχα■ω expressing not his age as a man, but his discipleship from the beginning. It is interesting thus to find incidentally that Cyprus had been blest of God, not only through the visits of Paul and Barnabas, but even before.

“And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly; and the day following Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present; and when he had saluted them, he explained one by one the things which God wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry; and when they heard it, they glorified God” (Acts 21:17-20). Here we see in full vigor the love and honor which reigned among the saints. Not that there were not trials and special trials in those days: it could not be otherwise. In this world no difference of a religious character could compare for depth with that which severed Jews from Gentiles. God Himself under the law had maintained the separation to the full, as our Lord did up to the cross. This closed the old to introduce the new—the order of grace and of the new creation in Christ which the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven carried out in power and joy and intelligence. Thenceforward Christ becomes all, and indeed He is worthy, as He is all; so is He in all; and the distinction of Jew and Greek, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, vanish in Him before God. Yet is there nothing which Christians find so difficult to apprehend and enjoy and practice as Christianity. Nevertheless the Spirit given to every Christian is not a spirit of fear nor of bondage, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, with Christ before our eyes. The path may be difficult, but as it is true, so is it the exercise of love; and it is all a question of appreciating Christ, and of applying the truth in a spirit of grace. As the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. We have only to believe, not to fear man, any more than to pursue our own thoughts!

The word of God is now revealed as a full answer to Christ, and by the Spirit will be found to solve every difficulty in detail. In no place, however, were the difficulties greater than in Jerusalem, the natural focus of extreme Jewish feeling. Thither the apostle had come, animated by strong feelings of love and pity for his nation, as he himself explains in Acts 24:17. “Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.” This was hardly his proper calling, though the love which led to it always wrought powerfully in his heart, as we know from Galatians 2 and other scriptures.

But there was another reason which made it critical for the apostle. His assigned province was toward the Gentiles (compare Gal. 2:7-9); and certainly the Holy Spirit had given many warnings through prophets along the road. No man, no apostle even, is strong, save in dependence on the Lord; as he said himself, “When I am weak, then am I strong.” For Christ’s “strength is made perfect in weakness.” And Paul above all could say, “Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” But it is instructive to see that Antioch proved a dangerous place for Peter, as Jerusalem did even for Paul. The Lord wrought effectually in Peter, yet it was mainly and conspicuously for the apostleship of the circumcision. He wrought by Paul also assuredly with the Gentiles, if He ever wrought mightily by man on the earth.

But we anticipate. The arrival of Paul and his party in Jerusalem received a hearty welcome from the brethren. It would appear that James’ house was the known place for any special gathering of elders at any rate; as we heard of a meeting for prayer at the house of Mary, mother of John Mark (Acts 12). “The following day accordingly Paul went in with us,” it is said, “unto James”, and all the elders were present,” There must have been very many groups of Christian Jews in Jerusalem, where their numbers were now to be counted by thousands. Large buildings, appropriated to the assembly, were as yet, it would seem, unknown. The present occasion however was not for the meeting of the assembly; only the elders were present. They no doubt came from those many groups, and their meeting together as elders would powerfully contribute to keep up order and unity, without in the least degree superseding, while truth governed in a spirit of grace, the responsibility of the assembly. We can readily understand that James’ house was a suited place for such to meet. The verse does not give us the impression of an assemblage on this occasion only, though it was very likely that the news of Paul coming and come might account for “all the elders” being present at this time. There are constant wants which would call for the meeting of the elders ordinarily; but this occasion of course had the extraordinary element of Paul’s presence.

“And when he had saluted them, he explained one by one the things which God wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.” There was perfect openness on his part. No effort to put prominently forward what God had wrought among the Jews or in the synagogues. He spread before them particularly what had been given him to do among the nations. Doubtless this was intended of the Lord to enlarge their hearts. They were accustomed in Jerusalem to see or hear but little of their Gentile brethren. The apostle put it forward carefully; and when they heard it, they glorified “God” —for this appears to be the true reading, rather than “the Lord.”

Acts 21:21-26

The apostle could say, “If any man preacheth any gospel other than this which we preach, let him be anathema” (Gal. 1:9). A different gospel is not another. It is the abandonment of what Paul preached, or a human substitute for it. It may be questioned whether any other apostle could speak so absolutely. Paul preached what they preached, but one may fairly doubt that they preached all that Paul preached. If we bear in mind the special manner of his conversion and truth therein revealed, it helps to understand this. He commenced with a Savior in glory, and had the wondrous truth communicated to him from the first, that Christ and the Christian are one. “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” A saint now is also a member of Christ’s body. This the others learned; but the apostle Paul had it revealed to him from the starting point, and was the Lord’s special instrument for carrying it out in the world. It was not “the gospel of God” only, rich as this expression is, but “the gospel of the glory of Christ.”

It was Christ, known no more after the flesh, but risen and glorified. Gentile darkness and Jewish law were left behind, and even promise was eclipsed by a brightness far beyond it. It was grace in its fullest exercise and highest splendor in the person of Christ, with Whom we are associated in the closest relationship, Christ the Head over all things, but the Head given to the church which is His body. The church is not among the “all things,” but united with Him Who is over all things, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. Hence the apostle preached the gospel of the glory of Christ as none other is reported to have done. This comes out very distinctly in 2 Corinthians 3-5. Substantially it appears in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians; but there it is rather called the mystery of the gospel. “This mystery is great,” says he, “but I speak of Christ and of the church.” He being the exalted head, she being His body and bride, the church is even now one with Him. For the church He gave Himself up, that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

The glory of Christ on high is the answer to His humiliation below, whatever else may follow. Nor is there any witness to it so bright. Hence the apostle speaks of “my gospel,” and “our gospel” where he names his companions along with himself. It was given him to preach it in all its height of blessedness; and hence the danger of letting it slip, if even one that once knew it begins to preach grace at a lower level only, true as it may be. Nothing so completely lifts above the tradition and the thoughts of men.

Hence the danger even to the apostle himself when in Jerusalem. Another atmosphere was breathed there. It is not that they did not confess Jesus to be the Christ, and look for His kingdom and glory; but out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. “And they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many myriads there are among the Jews of those that believe, and they are all zealous for the law. And they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all Jews that are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs” (Acts 21:20-21). This witness was true as far as they themselves were

concerned; but what they were informed of Paul was an exaggeration. Whatever his sense of Christian liberty, none was more tolerant of Jewish conscience; on the other hand, none more resolute to teach the Gentile believers that they had nothing to do with law, but with Christ dead and risen. What on earth had Gentile believers to do with circumcision, or the other institutions and customs of Israel? For heaven, as in heaven, all this was unknown.

As the full grace of God preached by the apostle startled not a few of the saints in Jerusalem, a gloss was sought to prove that he was a good Jew notwithstanding. “What is it therefore? They will certainly hear that thou art come. Do thou this that we say to thee: We have four men with a vow on them, these take and purify thyself with them, and be at charges over them, that they may shave their heads, and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee, but that thou thyself also walkest orderly keeping the law” (Acts 21:22-24).

This was not strange advice for the Christians in Jerusalem to give, but it seems a descending path for the apostle Paul to follow. No one knew better than he to walk as dead with Christ and risen with Him; no one better than he to please the Lord without fear of the opinions of men, or even of his brethren. With him it was a very small thing to be examined of others or of himself. Had he looked to the Lord for His guidance now, perhaps he would have advised James and the rest to judge nothing before the time till the Lord come, Who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall each have the praise from God. Indeed it is doubtful whether anything done as a witness to ourselves (and this seems the gist of James’ counsels to Paul) is ever blest of God or satisfies man. We shall see what the issue was in this instance. In their past dealings with the Gentiles who believed (Acts 15), they had acted with divine wisdom. So it is here added, “But, as touching the Gentiles which believed we wrote, giving judgment, that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.” These injunctions were clearly understood, before the law was even given to Israel. It was not natural religion which ignores sin and the fall. For God man needs revelation; but in such things Christianity only confirms the broad principles God had laid down before Israel existed.

“Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfillment of the days of the purification until the offering was offered for every one of them” (Acts 21:26).

The apostle yielded to his Jewish brethren. It was in no way a step which flowed from his own judgment before God; and we shall see that it was wholly in vain as far as the Jews were concerned. No doubt there was misunderstanding on their part; but we can scarcely say, whatever one’s reverence for the apostles, that the light of the Lord shone upon the course that was then recommended or pursued. Their conduct might not be without failure in this or that particular; whilst their teaching, beyond all doubt in what was written in the Spirit for the permanent direction of the church, was perfectly guarded from the least error. “We are of God” (said one of them): “he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:6). This is stringent, but it is the truth; and, if so, it is really grace to let all saints know that there is such a standard not Christ’s person only, but the apostolic word. If we truly confess Him, we shall surely hear them: if we refuse them, we do not really own

Him Who sent and inspired them. If we reject Him and them, we are irretrievably lost, and guiltier than Jews or heathen, who had not such privileges. For the true light now shines. God is fully revealed in Christ, and the written word makes both known.

Acts 21:27-40

It was a singular sight, Paul purifying himself to show that he walked orderly and kept the law. He was evidently walking according to the thoughts of others, which no more glorifies God than it satisfies man. “And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia when they saw him in the temple stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help. This is the man that teacheth all everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul brought into the temple. And the whole city was moved, and the people ran together, and they laid hold on Paul and dragged him out of the temple; and forthwith the doors were shut. And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief officer (chiliarch) of the cohort, that the whole of Jerusalem was in confusion, and immediately be took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them; and they, when they saw the chief officer and the soldiers, ceased beating Paul. Then the chief officer came near and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains, and inquired who he might be, and what he had done. And some shouted one thing, and some another, among the crowd. And when he could not know the certainty because of the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the castle (literally, camp). And when he came upon the steps, so it was that he was borne upon the soldiers, because of the violence of the crowd. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, Away with him” (Acts 21:27-36).

No more devoted servant of the Lord ever lived. This however did not hinder the effects of a mistaken position. He had departed from those to whom the Lord sent him, out of his excessive love for the ancient people of God. At the instance of others he had sought to conciliate them to the uttermost, but the effect in no way answered to the desire either of James or of Paul. Can we say that in going up to Jerusalem, there was such a following of Christ as he loved to commend to the saints? “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ.” When the Lord went up for His last and fatal visit, how great the difference! He cast out all them that sat and bought in the temple, He overthrew the tables of the money changers, and of them that sold doves; He healed the blind and lame that came to Him. There He confounded those that demanded His authority, He laid before them—the proudest—their inferiority to the publicans and harlots whom they despised, and set out their past and present history in the light of God, so that they could not but own the miserable destruction which impended over their wickedness, and the passing away of God’s vineyard to other husbandmen, who should render to Him the fruits in their seasons. And whatever their enmity, they feared the multitude because they took Him for a prophet. And when the chief religions leaders came in succession to tempt Him, He silenced them, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians; and wound up the entire scene by the great test question for the Jews, how David’s son could be, as He incontestibly is, David’s Lord. A question which no Jew was able to answer then, any more than from that day to the present. Hence He could only pronounce woes upon their actual state, and on their proved rain prophesy of the kingdom which He is Himself to bring in as the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.

Undoubtedly, none the less was He rejected and crucified, but He was the faithful witness. There was not a shadow of a compromise: He said nothing, did nothing, seemed nothing, but the truth to the glory of God. He witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate, the high priest of Israel having shown himself baser and more cruel than the most hard-hearted heathen, who condemned the Lord to be crucified.

Yet assuredly the apostle loved the Lord, and answered to His mind as no man did, even among the apostles; still he was a man; and human feeling in its most estimable shape betrays him into, I will not say, a contrast with, but, a deflection from, our Lord in Jerusalem. For Christ, whatever the depth of His humiliation, oh! what triumph hung on His decease which He accomplished there.

For Paul it was not death at Jerusalem, but the hatred which threw him into the hands of the Gentiles to be, as yet a prisoner only, not yet to die, though ultimately what befell him among the Gentiles was his true glory, and there he suffered simply and solely a witness for the truth. He had his heart's desire, the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death. "And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he said unto the chief officer, May I say something unto thee? He said, Dost thou know Greek? Thou art not then the Egyptian who before these days stirred up to sedition, and led out into the wilderness, the four thousand men of the assassins (or Sicarii)? But Paul said, I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I beseech thee give me leave to speak unto the people. And when he had given him leave, Paul standing on the steps beckoned with his hand unto the people, and when there was great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying" (Acts 21:37-40).

Here again Paul takes very different ground from that which was his wont, he pleads his Jewish race to the commander. Elsewhere who so firm to hold to the grand truth that Christ is all? who more completely above any human distinction or plea in the service of the Lord? It was Paul the apostle indeed, yet not here in the Gentile province assigned him, but in Jerusalem, seeking to reconcile the irreconcilable. There is the weakness of one who was strong by grace beyond all others on his own ground.

Acts 22:1-5

In the earlier part of this book we had the history of the apostle's conversion in its historical order, bearing profoundly upon the progress of the gospel, and the revelation of Christian truth. Here we have it as a part of his defense before the people of Israel. It has therefore a specific object, marked by the use of the Hebrew language, which accounts for its other peculiarities. Discrepancy there is really none, any more than in other parts of scripture; the appearance is due solely to the difference of design, which here is most obvious, as it undeniably is later in the book. In Acts 26 we have a short account modified by the fact that it was addressed to the king, Herod Agrippa the younger, as well as to the Roman governor. Whatever peculiarities have been observed, they are due to the same cause. The same principle in fact applies to the treatment of every object among men of intelligence. Scripture only adopts the same rule, but in a perfection to which men are unequal. Our place as believers is to learn by that which offends incredulity against all reason. "Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defense that I now make unto you (and when they heard that he spake to them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet, and he saith), I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, and brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to strictness of the law of the fathers, being zealous for God even as all ye are today. And I persecuted this way unto death, binding and delivering unto prisons both men and women, as also the high priest beareth me witness, and all the elderhood, from whom also I received letters from the brethren for Damascus to bring those also that were there, bound to Jerusalem that they might be punished" (Acts 22:1-5).

There was a providential training in the apostle's case as in others, but strikingly manifest in him who was a Jew, not a Gentile proselyte. He was born in Tarsus, a renowned center of letters and philosophy at that day. But he was brought up in Jerusalem, at the feet of the most celebrated Rabbi of his day. Yet if Gamaliel was learned and strict as an orthodox Pharisee, we have already had remarkable proof, quite apart from the apostle, of his singular moderation; when the Sadducees began to persecute the faith. It is not often erudite men are equally known for prudence, still less for the wisdom which brought in God, not formally, but with conscience; and God used it completely to turn away the council from their unbelieving and sanguinary thoughts. It was at his feet that he was brought up who was to be the Holy Spirit's witness to the grace of God in our Lord Jesus as no other man was since the world began.

His early training in Jerusalem would have conveyed no such presentiment to mortal eyes: he was instructed according to the strictness of the law of the fathers. If the Pharisees of Jerusalem were zealous beyond all others, he was yet more so; but in truth when faith came, he could all the better realize the complete change from law to grace. Those who never pierced below the surface of the one fail to appreciate the other; they are apt to mingle the two—the great bane of Christianity, whence law is no more law, and grace is no more grace. Law is the demand of human righteousness. Grace has now revealed God's righteousness, and this only is what the apostle designates the righteousness which is of faith; for Christ is the end of the law to righteousness for every one that believeth. It is not a question of man's effort, still less of his performance. He is not

called to ascend to heaven, any more than to descend into the abyss. It was Christ Who came down, even as Christ risen from the dead is gone up, and we become God's righteousness in Him. Salvation is wholly of Christ; it is what God loves to do—cannot but do consistently with His character in virtue of the work of Christ. The word therefore is nigh thee in thy mouth, and in thy heart, not the word that man prepares for God, but the word which God sends to be preached. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Thus has God indeed dealt, and can afford to deal, with sinners. It is His grace, but it is also His righteousness.

Now the more deeply Saul of Tarsus studied the law, and entered into its righteous inexorable claims on man, the more he felt himself awakened to the impossibility of salvation ender law. It was weak through the flesh, and must be bondage; bitter hopelessness could only result when conscience became enlightened. For salvation is altogether a question for God, Who, sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. Thus only could there be salvation. The law was able to do nothing but condemn the sinner. The gospel proclaims sin condemned, root and fruit, and the believer saved, and set free to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. It was exactly therefore such a zealot of law, who, when his eyes were opened by grace, could see and appreciate to the full, the deliverance of the gospel. The same principle applies even now, though there is no doubt an incalculable distance between the apostle and other saints howsoever blest, in our day or any other. Still the men who most enjoy and are best fitted to set forth the gospel, are often those who were deeply attached, in the days of their ignorance, to law and ordinances, which necessarily gender bondage, where there is the exercised conscience.

And this must have told powerfully upon the Jews who weighed the apostle's address. The apostle had never been a careless light-hearted Israelite; as his training was most strict, so his personal zeal was thorough. Indeed he had given the fullest proof, for he persecuted this way unto death. None like Saul of Tarsus, who was so active in binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. He was just a sample in the highest degree of those that have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. Who could speak therefore like him for personal experience to men ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own? So much the more did he now subject himself to the righteousness of God.

Nor could the high priest himself ignore the fact, but rather bear witness, and all the elderhood too; for he reminds them that he also received letters to the brethren, that is, the Jews elsewhere, and journeyed to Damascus to bring also those that were there to Jerusalem in bonds, in order to be punished. He who was to go out to all the world with the gospel, could not rest in his legal zeal within the bounds of Jerusalem or Judaea.

Acts 22:6-10

The apostle now recounts his own marvelous conversion; and as it was addressed to Jews, it is presented in a way suited to disarm their prejudices, if this were possible.

“And it came to pass, as I was journeying and drawing near to Damascus, that about mid-day there suddenly shone out of heaven a great light round about me; and I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying to me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And I answered, Who art Thou, Lord? And He said unto me, I am Jesus, the Nazarene, Whom thou persecutest. Now they that were with me beheld the light, but did not hear the voice of Him that was speaking to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Rise up, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which it hath been appointed for thee to do” (Acts 22:6-10).

Thus here the intimation is that it was about mid-day, still more precisely than we were told in Acts 9:3. This makes the vision far more striking. It was not a trance, but an open fact. The light which shone round about him out of heaven transcended the sun at mid-day, in the presence of men who were traveling with him. Deception was impossible. As far as we know, he, and he only, was converted thereby. The voice addressed no other at that time; and here it is particularly said that the rest heard not the voice of Him that was speaking to him. The same historian, who gives this as the distinct statement of the apostle, had himself told us that his fellow-travelers stood speechless, hearing the voice but beholding no one. This to a casual reader looks like a discrepancy; but a reader must be careless indeed, or bent on evil, who does not perceive that the two statements are altogether in harmony beneath the surface. In chap. ix. we learn that his companions heard a sound, and no more; and in our present chapter we learn that he alone heard the voice of Him that spoke to him. To the others it was inarticulate; to him it was not only intelligible, but the turning point of a life beyond all others rich in testimony to His grace who spoke to him.

For the time was now fully come for a new step in God’s ways. The heavenly glory of Christ was to be seen by a chosen witness called by Him in sovereign mercy from on high, the persecutor from the midst of his religiously rebellious career. It is grace no doubt in every case where the soul is brought from darkness into the marvelous light of God. But here all the truth shines with the utmost brilliancy. Stephen closed his testimony with a sight of Jesus in the glory of God. Saul begins his testimony for Jesus with Him seen in the same glory. It reminds one somewhat of the two prophets of old, one of whom ended his course with being taken up to heaven, whilst the other commenced it from that glorious sight which gave him thenceforth such a mighty impulse. It was none the less remarkable in the present case, because Saul had been privy to the death of Stephen, and kept the clothes of the false witnesses who stoned him whose spirit went up to the Lord Whose glory he had just seen and testified.

And if a brief interval elapsed after Stephen’s death, it was filled up by Saul still breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. Nevertheless the light out of heaven suddenly shone out round about him now. Smitten to the earth, he heard the voice say to him,

“Saul, Saul, why persecutest then Me?” Embittered though he was with tradition and prejudice, he could not but ask with astonishment, “Who art Thou, Lord?” No man was ever more assured that he was rendering service to God in patting out of the synagogue, or even killing, the disciples. He had a good conscience according to the law, in the zeal that persecuted the church (Phil. 3). As yet he knew neither the Father nor the Son. The True Light had never entered his soul. But now the light which shone round about him was but the harbinger of a better glory invisible to human eyes, “the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” His companions saw the outward brightness; they did not behold that which none can see, unless they are, by the power of God, brought out of darkness into it.

To his amazement he learned that He Who spoke, whom he could not but acknowledge to be the Lord of all, was the very Jesus Whom he was persecuting. For thus He was known in the persons of His own: Christ and the church are one. Immense discovery! and so much the more, in circumstances so unparalleled. The enemy broken down and henceforth obedient to the heavenly vision, he has Christ in glory, God’s Son, revealed, not to him only, but in him. See Gal. 1:16. He is life, and the Christian is one with Him. If it was true of the disciples whom he persecuted, it was no less true of their persecutor, now himself a disciple. “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” When we see the Lord at His coming again, we shall be like Him, even in body changed into the same image. If we are being transformed now, even as by the Lord the Spirit, we shall be conformed then to the Lord and by the Lord; for we shall see Him as He is (2 Cor. 3, 1 John 3).

These great principles were all involved in the apostle’s vision, though of course it is not meant that they were all unveiled to his spirit at the moment. But in due time no one knew better, nor so well; though these truths were thus conveyed, and in the most powerful way, in that great fact, incalculable in its bearing on the church, and even for the world. For who of all men ever made good a commission so unlimited as the apostle’s? It was felt and acknowledged by the twelve, that he was the apostle of the uncircumcision, as truly as they of the circumcision. This in no way precluded their seeking the good of the Gentiles; still less did it hinder him from labors abundant among the Jews, as every place, we may say, testified where there were Jews. But it did mark the characteristic breadth of his mission. He might seek to build up the church in entire and heavenly separation from the world; but it was his beyond any man to fulfill the word of his Master, “Go out to all the world, and preach the gospel to all the creation.”

What an appeal, too, his own account of his conversion was to the crowd of Jews that were then listening! None could deny the facts; the high priest could not but bear witness; all the elderhood of Israel in Jerusalem would have gladly contradicted if they could. The letters he received to his Jewish brethren could not be gainsayed, any more than his own bitter persecution of the Christian way unto death, as well as prison. The companions of his journey to Damascus, why were they silent? If they heard not the words of Jesus, they were not deaf to the preternatural sound; they did see the light above the brightness of the sun shine round about them all. But all wonders fail to convert the heart to God. It is the voice of Christ that quickens the dead; and now is the hour for quickening souls; as by and by there will come another hour, when the voice of the Son shall summon from the grave those that have done good to a resurrection of life, and those that have done evil to a resurrection of judgment, which last act of Christ solemnly closes the history of this world. But sovereign grace is now awakening the souls that hear the word of the Lord; and as this was manifested in the most extraordinary manner to Saul of Tarsus, so was he called in the

highest degree to be a minister of God's sovereign grace, and of Christ's heavenly glory. "And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Rise up, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which it hath been appointed thee to do." Here again was a singular break with all the apostolic antecedents. The Lord commanded no return to Jerusalem. Saul must enter Damascus and there, not through a previous apostle, still less the apostolic college, but, through a disciple set in no high position, learn what it had been appointed for him to do.

Acts 22:11-16

We have already seen in commenting on Acts 9. what an important event took place that day: a distinct and fresh step in the ways of God for bringing out the church (already formed, it is true) into manifestation by his ministry who was then converted so extraordinarily that divines treat it as one of the standing and most striking evidences of the truth of Christianity.

Still all was not done even as regards. Saul of Tarsus; the basis was laid, but no more. The blindness physically which had come upon him was to be taken away; and assuredly very much more light spiritually was yet to shine into his soul; but the principle that was to be folly developed in due time was already involved in the character of the word of the Lord to him. “And as I could not see for the glory of the light, being led by the hand of those that were with me, I came into Damascus; and one Ananias, a pious man according to the law, borne witness to by all the Jews that dwelt there, came unto me, and standing by said to me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight: and in the very hour I looked upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know His will and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from His mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for Him to all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and get baptized, and have thy sins washed away, calling on His name” (Acts 22:11-16).

As Paul was to be, beyond all others, a witness of Christ to the Gentiles, so God took special care to remove from every fair upright man all suspicion of collusion on the part of any Jew. Outwardly the vision of glory was unmistakable before many witnesses. What passed between the Lord and His servant was necessarily confined to Saul alone of the company. But divine wisdom apprised Ananias of what had happened, independently of Saul and of every other on earth. We are not told here of his fasting for three days and nights; but the fact was patent that by the hand of those that were with him he had to be led into Damascus. That blindness furnished occasion for a fresh display of divine power. The channel of it was a simple disciple; yet was he a devout man according to the law, and well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there. Unsought, he came; and standing by him who was blind he said, “Brother Saul, receive thy sight”; and the word was with power: Paul received his sight and looked upon him. In Acts 9, we hear of the vision that Saul had, preparing for the visit of Ananias, as the same chapter lets us know that Ananias had a vision in which the Lord sent him, by no means willing, without delay to Saul. For it was well known at Damascus, as well as Jerusalem, what a zealous persecutor of the church was the learned Jew of Tarsus—now a man of prayer.

Here again, we have the beautiful fruit of confidence in the word of the Lord. “Brother Saul” —how refreshing it must have been to the heart of the converted zealot! The key to what is here stated, and to what is omitted, is the design: the apostle recounts his conversion to the Jews. “The God of our fathers” appears here alone. It was He, as Ananias said, and not another, Who had appointed him to know His will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice out of His mouth. It is much more than simply that the Lord, even Jesus, had appeared to him in the way which be came. Here we learn, too, that Ananias told the apostle before he was baptized that he should be a

witness for Christ unto all men of what he had seen and heard. This ought to have prepared the Jews for the direction given to Paul's ministry. Would they have him resist the "God of our fathers" and His known will? There were two witnesses, by whose mouth every word should be established. In Acts 9 his commission is named to Ananias by the Lord; but the historian does not there mention that this was repeated to the apostle. Here we learn that it was so, for he repeats it himself. Everything comes exactly in place and season.

In Acts 9 we are told that when he received his sight, he arose and was baptized, and took food and was strengthened, as well as that all-important fact that he was then and there filled with the Holy Spirit. There is no apostolic succession in this case assuredly. Ananias was but a disciple. God was acting extraordinarily in the case of Paul. Jewish order was quite set aside for the apostle of the Gentiles; yet none but the enemy of grace and truth could deny that he was an apostle, with a calling at least as high as the twelve, and called to a work incomparably more vast and profound.

Here also we have the interesting fact of the terms in which Ananias called him to submit to baptism, on which a few words may be well, as to some there is no small difficulty. The reason of the departure from the A.V., as well as the R.V., however slight, is an endeavor to express the force of the Middle Voice, as it is called in Greek. This however is independent of the doctrinal difficulty to some in calling on the apostle to have his sins washed away in baptism. Why should this seem hard? It is what baptism always means, though indeed it means yet more, even death to sin, as the apostle himself treats it in Romans 6. Baptism is the sign of salvation, as another apostle teaches, who carefully lets us know in the same context that the effectual work rests on Christ's death and resurrection (1 Pet: 3.). Without faith no doubt all is valueless before God; but however precious may be that which faith receives through the word, the outward sign has its importance. So much is this so, that no one stands on the external ground of a Christian, who has not been baptized with water to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. To refuse baptism is to despise the authority of the Lord, as unbelief slights His grace. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not, even if baptized, shall be damned (or condemned).

Acts 22:17-22

The remarkable vision with which Paul first began was by no means the only one; we learn here of another on his return to Jerusalem. 2 Corinthians 12 speaks of them also in a more general way. But what happened in Jerusalem he himself now proceeds to tell in detail. “And it came to pass that when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw Him, saying unto me, Make haste and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning Me. And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue those that believe on Thee; and when the blood of Stephen Thy witness was shed, I also was standing by and consenting, and keeping the garments of those that slew him. And He said unto me, Depart, for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience unto this word; and they lifted up their voices and said, Away with such [a fellow] from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live” (Acts 22:17-22).

The incident at Jerusalem is full of interest spiritually, because it communicates the perfect ease and intimacy in which scripture sets forth the relations of the servant with the Master. It would have been easy to have suppressed the account, if it had not been of standing moment and general value. The statement of it had the most distressing effect on the Jews who had listened till then. This excited their indignation to the highest. Nevertheless, as we see, the apostle brought it plainly out to vindicate the direction of his labors without limit as apostle to the Gentiles. We may be quite sure that naturally he had as great a reluctance to go at the word of the Lord on such an errand as the Jews had to hear about it. Traditionally the Jew was everything in the matter of religion; all this feeling and the ground of it was overthrown in the cross of Christ. How true, as the apostle wrote to the Corinthians in his Second Epistle 5:17, “The old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new; and all things are of God, Who reconciled us unto Himself by Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation.” The power of such a ministry is especially shown, not in abiding at Jerusalem, but in going out toward the Gentiles wherever they may be; for we are not Israelites, nor yet the lost sheep of that house. We are not the people, but rather in comparison “dogs” according to the law. Now, however, all is changed. It is the gospel; and all things are become new. As the mission of our apostle is for heaven, so is his direction towards the Gentiles.

No wonder that he himself shrank even in the presence of the Lord; but so Paul is to learn in his trance at the temple of Jerusalem. “Make haste,” said the Lord, “and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning Me.” This was very painful to the apostle’s heart; others had tasted similar sorrow even before Christianity. Moses knew it in early days, though the stiffneckedness of the Jews then was as nothing compared with what it was proved at the cross. And afterward Jeremiah and others of the prophets drank enough of this cup to feel the bitterness and grief. But Paul was as remarkable as Moses for the love of Israel, and tasted the bitterness of the Jew more than any of their prophets. In divine ways he was just the more to be sent as Christ’s ambassador to the Gentiles. Had he loved Israel less, he had not been so fit for the new and heavenly mission. In everything it must be above nature to represent grace in any measure aright.

How little those that saw or knew of Paul evangelizing the Gentiles appreciated the feelings with which he had entered on the work! “And I said, Lord, themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believe on Thee.” His heart yearned over Israel, his burning desire was to have labored in their midst. When the Lord had told him to retire from Jerusalem, because the Jews would not receive of him testimony concerning Christ, he even pleads that he was just the man to go to Jerusalem, that themselves knew how he had hated the way, how he had imprisoned and beat in every synagogue the believers. Yea more, he summons up the most terrible tale of persecuting zeal as the crowning reason to be allowed to preach to the Jews, and as a reason why they must surely welcome him if no other preacher of the gospel. “And when the blood of Stephen Thy witness was shed, I also was standing by and consenting, and keeping the garments of those that slew him.” It is evident that Paul used all this as standing him in good stead to labor among the Jews. But He that made the heart knew best, better far than Paul, and He said unto him, “Depart; for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles.” The determining word was spoken: whatever might be Paul’s feeling, he now learns the will of the Lord concerning his labors. It was not merely now, Get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, but “I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles.” No Israelite more fervently sought to commend the gospel to the Jews; no servant pleaded for it more earnestly with his Master. The freedom with which he appeals is a standing lesson to us of the liberty into which the gospel brings us. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” But we should also learn that the gospel leaves no uncertainty for the path and the service. The true light shines. Christ is the way, as well as the truth and the life, and He is not mere truly the way to the Father than in Paul’s case toward the Gentiles. The gospel is heavenly light shining into the heart and on the path here below.

Acts 22:23-29

Early in this book we had in Peter a beautiful instance of a conscience purged by blood (Acts 3:13-14). So complete was it that he could openly tax the Jews with denying the Holy One and the Just. Had he not been guilty of this very sin himself in a more direct way than any other? Yes; but it was now wholly blotted out through the blood which cleanseth from all sin; and so conscious was he that it was gone before God, that he could without a blush charge the Jews with the sin, without a thought of himself save of infinite mercy towards him.

Similarly in the verse we had last before us the apostle Paul is another instance, if possible more touching, and no less instructive. He says to the Lord in his desire to preach the gospel to them, “They themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue those that believed on Thee; and when the blood of Stephen, Thy witness, was shed, I also was standing by and consenting, and keeping the garments of those that slew him.” Not a trace of the guilt remains on his conscience. As Peter proved in preaching to others, so he, Paul, publicly states to the same people how he had spread it personally before the Lord as the ground on which he wished to be sent as a witness to his brethren after the flesh. But the Lord knew all perfectly. Paul was His chosen vessel, not to Jerusalem, but far hence unto the Gentiles. His conscience was perfectly purged; but the mind of the Lord alone is perfectly right and wise; and so here it was soon proved. “They gave him audience unto this word, and they lifted up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live” (Acts 22).

Intimately familiar as the apostle was with the feelings of the Jews, he was at this time scarcely prepared for their implacable jealousy of the Gentiles. Yet was it what he himself was too conscious of in his unconverted days: the people were now where he was then. The change in him was so complete that he seems to have failed in realizing their condition. Christ was all to him. That they should so abhor the grace of God, rising above all man’s sin, whether Jewish or Gentile, is indeed astonishing, and the clearest proof that man is lost. Hatred of grace is in no way mitigated by intelligence, learning or religiousness. All these had united in Saul of Tarsus; and they might be found more or less in some of the Jews of Jerusalem. But the same pride of nature and abuse of God’s promises, which had led the nation to crucify the Messiah, hardened them now to reject and hate the gospel, above all the sending it to the Gentile no less than the Jew. “And as they cried out and threw off their garments and east dust into the air, the commander ordered him to be brought into the castle, directing that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know for what cause they had shouted thus against him And when they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned? And when the centurion heard it, he went to the commander and told him, saying, What art thou about to do? For this man is a Roman. And the commander came and said unto him, Tell me, art thou. a Roman? And he said, Yes. And the commander answered, With a great sum I obtained this citizenship. And Paul said, But I am (so) born. They then that were about to examine him immediately departed from him, and the commander also was afraid, when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him” (Acts 22:23-29).

The exasperation of the Jews is manifest in this striking scene. They were roused to the highest degree of feeling on behalf of their religion as they considered it. It is only the faith of Jesus which gives us to see things in God's light. Had they measured themselves by this standard, they must have been in the dust themselves, and owned that it was all over with them as a people. It was not only that they had failed in righteousness; they had rejected God come down among them in infinite love. Repentance, therefore, of the deepest kind alone became them. They would then have seen that it was not for a guilty people to judge of God's ways. They would have learned how admirably suited grace was, now that they were ruined in the last trial that God could make: Jehovah rejected of old by His own people, the Son come in love rejected, the Holy Spirit, with the gospel, all rejected. It is in vain to talk of law, or even promises, before the cross. Yet God is now free to save the lost who believe in Jesus, whatever they may be. Granted that the Jews had exceeding privileges and a distinctive covenant; but the Jew had been foremost in slaying Him in whom all the promises center, their securer and their crown. All relationship with God for man on the earth, and we may say for Israel especially, was broken and gone; but grace could shine from heaven, and call to heaven all who believe in Christ; and this is exactly what the gospel is now making good. There is a new head and a new calling; but all is in Christ above; and consequently earthly distinctions, as well as disabilities, are alike vanished away. If man universally, Jew or Gentile, is lost, the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which is lost. This, by the gospel, is effected for those who believe; and Paul's mission, being both the highest and the widest, was pre-eminently to the Gentile world. It was for this heavenly and indiscriminate task he was really fitted when awakened to see his intensely Jewish zeal, now judged in the light of, not only the cross, but the heavenly glory of Christ. He was the apostle of the uncircumcision. It was therefore a mistake to put himself forward specially before the Jews in Jerusalem, as before with the Lord in the vision.

But there is another element of interest in the passage. The commandant had given orders to examine the apostle by scourging, in order that the cause of the clamor against him might be found out. Paul has resort to a plea most natural, in order to escape pain and ignominy; for it was a serious breach of law that he a Roman, and uncondemned, should be tied up for scourging. Nothing can be calmer too than the manner in which he put it forward. There was no excitement, still less the smallest approach to the assertion of right, which was not unknown then, but has taken such a hold of men in our days. The centurion names it to the commander, who inquires and learns that, whilst he had bought, his own citizenship, Paul was a Roman born. This of course put an end to all thought of torture, and the commander was afraid because he had bound him. But was it the accustomed height of Christian truth on which the apostle stood? Where do we find an approach to it in his Epistles? and where does heavenly and suffering grace shine as in these? Present oneness with Christ effaces all our natural conditions: Jew or Greek, Scythian or barbarian, bond or free, what matters it? Christ is all, as He is in all that are His.

Acts 22:30 and 23:1-6

It would appear that what excited the alarm of the commander and the centurion was the tying up Paul with the thongs. This was a great offense against a Roman citizen. “Because he had bound him,” I understand to be for this purpose, for in an ordinary way it appears that he was not absolutely loosed. “But on the morrow desiring to know the certainty why he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him, and commanded the chief priests and all the council to come together, and brought Paul down and set [him] before them. And Paul, fixing his eyes on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded those that stood by him to smite his mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God is about to smite thee, whited wall. And dost thou sit judging me according to the law, and breaking the law commandest me to be smitten? And those that stood by said, Revilest thou God’s high priest? and Paul said, I did not know, brethren, that he was high priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people” (Acts 22:30-23:5).

It is scarcely supposed that this was a regular assemblage of the Sanhedrim; it was done hurriedly to meet a crisis. A military commander had no authority so to assemble the religious chiefs of the Jews. This may serve to explain what ordinarily would seem scarcely intelligible. Paul appears not to have known that the high priest was present. Had he been in his official robes, this could scarcely be understood; especially as we are told that Paul looked steadfastly at the council. If it were an informal meeting, neither high priest nor other may have worn any distinctive raiment.

Ananias is quite distinct from Annas the high priest in the earlier days of the Gospels; nor had he been so long appointed that Paul must have remembered him. He may have been a comparative stranger to the apostle, especially in his official capacity. But, what is of more importance to remark, the apostle’s testimony was that he had lived before God in all good conscience unto this day: not a word about Christ or the gospel. It was thoroughly true. Even in his unconverted days we know that he could say, “Touching law, a Pharisee....touching righteousness that is in law, found blameless” Of this he thinks and speaks as he confronted the council. Surely it was not according to his new calling and that which was his life now. For Christ was all to him. He was thinking of the Jews; he declared what seemed thoroughly calculated to meet their thoughts. But it utterly failed, and the high priest Ananias commanded those that stood by to smite him on the mouth. This was an injurious insult, perpetrated by the judge, and in the teeth of the law. But it is not surprising that the apostle’s words provoked the high priest; and none the less, because he was as far as possible from the conscientiousness of a Gamaliel.

But the apostle resented the contumely and reproved it severely. “God will smite thee, whited wall.” In every respect this was true. Ananias was no more than a hypocritical evildoer. Our Lord had made an allusion in Matthew 23:27 which will help us to understand this; and it appears that God did smite the hypocrite not long after.

As high priest he was sitting to judge Paul after the law, and there contrary to the law he commanded him to be smitten; but did Paul rise in his quick rebuke to the height of grace any

more than of truth? The apostle is thoroughly righteous, but he descends rather to the same ground on which they stood; he had spoken with warmth however truly, so that the bystanders could say, “Revilest thou God’s high priest? And Paul said, I did not know, brethren, that he was high priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people.” The apostle hastens to acknowledge the error, as far as it was such, whatever might be the unworthiness of the conduct and of the language that occasioned it. Still Ananias was high priest that day. This Paul owns. He ought not to have spoken so of one in that position. The word is plain, “Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people.” Overruled of God and prophetic, was it Christ-like? Was it not rather the immediate resentment of a righteous man at an unrighteous deed? He at once apologizes, when he learned the official state of the judge however unjust. “I wist not,” and so on. But God loves to guide those who are kept immediately dependent on Him, even when they know nothing of the circumstances.

The apostle throughout scarcely seems to be breathing his ordinary spiritual atmosphere. This comes out still more plainly in what follows. “But when Paul perceived that the one part were of the Sadducees and the other of the Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; concerning the hope and resurrection of [the] dead I am judged” (vs. 6). Here the root of the matter appears. The apostle avails himself of a rent between the two great parties of the Jews, to take the ground which would enlist the more orthodox and God-fearing in his favor, “I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees,” he cried. Was this again according to the height of the truth he preached and loved? It was incontestably true; but was it Christ all in all? was it not rather a prudent appeal sure to split up the crowd before him, for himself to fall back on a ground altogether lower than his wont? Nevertheless there was truth and important truth before all here. “I am judged concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead.” This thoroughly falls in with the book of the Acts. Luke begins here as his Gospel ends, with the resurrection and ascension, and gives full scope to the testimony of the risen Lord throughout. The apostle every where consistently urges the hope and resurrection of the dead. It was bound up with Christ, the Son of man; but he does not directly introduce the fall truth of His person any more than he puts forward at this time the resurrection “from” the dead. The resurrection “of” the dead is ft great and needed truth notwithstanding; and to this, not the Sadducees who now were in power, but the Pharisees in their way held firmly.

The apostle knew resurrection in an incomparably larger measure. To him it was inseparable from the glorified Christ, the Head of the church, who really was his life and his testimony; and for this he endured habitual rejection and suffering. But in Jerusalem the apostle is not found in the same power as elsewhere. The spirit of the place had its influence; in all this business we find him by no means according to that heavenly light which so shines throughout his accustomed orbit.

Acts 23:7-9

The high priest Ananias was too truly a representative of the people as a whole. They were no better than a whited wall; and they too in due time afterward fell under the smiting of God. The apostle turns to the audience, as we saw, when he perceived that the one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, and cried out in the counsel, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am judged. “And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection neither angel nor spirit; but Pharisees confess them both. And there arose a great clamor, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees’ part stood up and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man; and [what] if a spirit spoke to him, or an angel?” (Acts 23:7-9.)

We have seen all through the Acts of the Apostles that the Sadducees were as prominent in opposition after the resurrection of Christ and the descent of the Spirit, as the Pharisees had been while the Lord was on earth. There seems a certain fitness in this. The Righteous One was intolerable to the earthly-minded champions of human righteousness, ever found wanting when weighed in God’s balances. When He rose from the dead, the Sadducees were naturally roused to action, more especially as they were at the time in outward power. The high priests successively seem to have been of that party. The resurrection of Jesus was a deathblow to their system, as it is to infidelity at all times. For it is God’s intervention in power whilst the world goes on as it is, the pledge that the risen One will come and judge it; for He it is who is of God ordained Judge of quick and dead.

Resurrection is the sole and final condition of man which answers to the counsels of God, and will manifest His glory.

Paul, therefore, perceiving that if one part of his audience were Sadducees, the other were Pharisees, avails himself of the truth held by the Pharisees, which ought to have lifted all above personalities and prejudices. In all cases grace loves to do so; as flesh finds its wretched pleasure in continual strife and self-seeking. Here too it was of moment to press resurrection as a conditional truth of Christianity—resurrection not merely at the end but before the end comes. Not that the apostle here opens resurrection as specifically from the dead; he is content to speak of that which every God-fearing Jew acknowledged the hope and resurrection of the dead, which was certainly not for judgment of the wicked. Resurrection was not disputed but held from the beginning. Old Testament saints waited for it, not merely Israelites but those who were outside like Job, as may be seen in Job 19, when the Redeemer stands on earth at the latter day. Christ personally becomes, as every believer in Christ knows, the seal of the truth of resurrection, for in His case it is not only the dead man raised but raised from among the dead; and so it will be at His coming.

No Pharisee doubted the resurrection of the dead. Paul was not only a Pharisee but a son of Pharisees, a stronger expression than that which obtains in the received text or the A. V. He

belonged to a family of Pharisees, who rejected free-thinking and held to the common faith of God's people.

The effect was immediate. There arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. No doubt the apostle was not here preaching the gospel nor rendering that testimony to which his heart turned habitually. Christ resorted to no such measures when He was being judged; but it was surely righteous in itself if not according to the height of grace in Christ. But it was the means of no deliverance to Paul; on the contrary his adversaries were divided, but power was on the side of those who felt the blow struck at their infidelity. "For Sadducees say, that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit, but Pharisees confess them both." The Sadducees were the skeptics of that day and of the lowest kind; they were blinded by materialism, the poisonous error which is now prevailing everywhere throughout Christendom. How solemn that the worst unbelief of Judaism should now pervade an immense part of the baptized in Christendom! Catholic or Protestant, high church or low, or dissent, makes little difference. The great expansion of experimental science has fed this distemper far beyond the effect of pure or mixed sciences in past days. Even the discoveries which have added so much to personal ease and selfish enjoyment, all tend to help it on. Man in his present life becomes everything: God is excluded, not to say denied, because He is unseen.

The resurrection of the dead, and yet more from the dead, is the grand weapon of faith against prevailing error and in favor of souls in danger of destruction. The God Who raised up Jesus from the dead is sending remission of sins through His name. To Him give all the prophets witness (how much more the gospel?), that everyone who believes on Him shall receive both the forgiveness he needs, and the life in Christ without which there can be no living to God. This alone is the true deliverance from Sadduceeism then, or from that which is akin at the present time.

Acts 23:10-22

“And when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them and bring [him] into the castle. And the night following the Lord stood by him and said, Be of good cheer, for as then hast fully testified concerning Me at Jerusalem, so also must thou testify at Rome” (Acts 23:10-11).

The Gentile in chief command was not used to the gusts of violence that blew among the Jews when a question of religions difference sprung up and roused them. At this time indeed religious indifference prevailed excessively among the heathen. It was not so among the Jews, though their moral condition was wretched in the extreme. The chiliarch, therefore, being alarmed at the agitation, had Paul removed from the midst of men who seemed excited enough to tear him in pieces.

It was a time when the apostle might have been much tried. He had appealed to orthodox feeling against the Sadducean unbelief that sought his destruction, but he was a prisoner still, though safely guarded by Roman soldiers. It was not the happiest position for one who valued nothing but Christ. So much the more gracious was that which we last read, “And the following night the Lord stood by him and said, Be of good cheer; for as thou didst fully testify the things about Me at Jerusalem, so must thou also testify at Rome.” Truly the Lord is good: not a word of blame; nothing but assurance of help, and this by so remarkable a manifestation at the very time when discouragement would have been natural. The apostle’s visit to Jerusalem had not resulted in the least as he himself desired. He might have regarded it as only a failure. The Lord noticed nothing but his faithful testimony; and He adds, that so he must testify at Rome also.

This was evidently then the corrected and proper scope of Paul’s allotted sphere: Jerusalem was outside it. For Peter had been entrusted with the gospel of the circumcision, as Paul was beyond all controversy, with that of the uncircumcision; under which came Rome as the then metropolis of the world. Thither the apostle was to go, not free but in bonds, a prisoner, as suited the Lord, whilst it was a part of His moral government because he would go to Jerusalem. The greatest representative of the gospel was to enter Rome in a chain.

Has the gospel ever been otherwise at Rome ? It is not that God had not work there already done. Many souls there were before this calling on the name of the Lord, both Jews and Gentiles, as the Epistle to the Romans lets us see; but the great witness of the gospel was to enter Rome a prisoner. If released afterward, he returned, a prisoner again, to die at Rome for Christ. It was indeed a solemn type, as foreshadowing what Rome would ever prove to the gospel of God.

“And when it was day the Jews, having made a combination, put themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And those that made the conspiracy were more than forty, who therefore (οιτινες) came to the high priests and the elders, and said, We have put ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. Now

therefore do ye, with the council, signify to the commander that he bring him down unto you, as though ye would judge his cause more exactly. But we, before he come near, are ready to slay him" (Acts 23:12-15).

It is sorrowful to read the dark conspiracy of the Jews at this time. They were no better than the heathen, but rather worse as knowing better. So it ever is where light shines in measure without grace; it becomes deeper darkness. Deceit and violence characterized them, especially where the gospel was concerned, and none was so identified with it as Paul. God's word in the Law and the Psalms and the Prophets, was too truly verified in their case. Their feet were swift to shed blood and with their tongues they used deceit. They did not know the way of peace, but hated most him who preached and lived it. Alas! there was no fear of God before their eyes. And it is evident that the ecclesiastical chiefs were quite as much implicated as the blood-thirsty rabble, the prey of crafty leaders who taught that religion sanctifies murder (John 16:2). It is therefore said to be "the Jews," not merely "some of the Jews," as in the softened words of the Received Text. Accordingly when the conspirators told the religions leaders their plot to murder Paul on his way to the council, not a word of remonstrance or horror. The high priests and the elders were really therefore the more guilty. Dr. Hackett, and others, cite from Philo a passage which remarkably illustrates such conduct as a principle calmly laid down without the smallest sense of its atrocity. Now Philo was a contemporary Jew of Alexandria.

But God knows how to defeat wicked efforts against His servants. As he had comforted Paul's heart privately, so now He wrought providentially and, singular to say, through a relative of Paul himself who was there. "But Paul's sister's son heard of the ambush; and having come and entered into the castle, he reported it to Paul. And Paul called to [him] one of the centurions and said, Bring this young man to the commander; for he hath something to report to him. He therefore took and brought him to the commander, and saith, The prisoner Paul called me to [him] and asked me to bring this young man to thee, as he hath something to say to thee. And the commander took him by the hand, and going aside privately asked, What is that which you have to report to me? And he said, The Jews have agreed to ask thee to bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat more exactly concerning him. Do not thou therefore yield to them; for there lie in ambush for him more than forty men of them, who put themselves under a curse neither to eat nor to drink, till they have slain him; and now they are ready, looking for the promise from thee. So the commander let the young man go, charging him, Tell no man that thou didst show these things unto me" (Acts 23:16-22).

Whatever may have been the haste of Lysias at first, he appears to have waked up thoroughly to his duty on behalf of the prisoner against his relentless enemies, and to have sought at last to make up in kindness for the wrong then done.

It is instructive also to observe how far the apostle was from fanaticism in his proceedings. For, although the Lord had miraculously guaranteed his preservation that he might have the desire of his heart in bearing witness of Christ in Rome, he did not count it beneath him to advertise the military chief of the plot against his life. Confidence in the word of God does not despise or dispense with legitimate means. Perhaps men are not wanting who flatter themselves that they may be more faithful or spiritual than he.

Acts 23:23-35

The commander was prompt in action, as we have seen him considerate with Paul's young kinsman. "And he called unto him some two of the centurions and said, Make ready two hundred soldiers, that they may go as far as Caesarea, and seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, at the third hour of the night. And [he bade them] provide beasts that they might set Paul on and bring [him] safe through unto Felix the governor, having written a letter in this form: Claudius Lysias to the most excellent governor Felix greeting. This man when seized by the Jews and about to be slain by them, I coming up with the soldiery rescued, having learned that he was a Roman. And wishing to know thoroughly the cause for which they accused him, I brought [him] down unto their council, whom I found to be accused about questions of their law, but to have no charge laid worthy of death or bonds. And when it was shown to me that a plot would be against the man, I forthwith sent [him] unto thee, charging his accusers also to speak against him before thee. [Farewell.]" (Acts 23:23-30).

How the letter became known to the Evangelist we cannot say; but there it is with every mark of genuineness, and so much the more, because we can readily see that the commander was not scrupulous as to truth, and sought to commend his zeal and services to the governor. God is not straitened as to means, knowing all without means, and ever and anon communicating what is good for us to know as He sees fit. The commander in fact only learned that Paul was a Roman after he had caused him to be tied up for scourging: a serious infraction of the law as against a citizen. But it is quite natural that he, a heathen, should do what he could to hide his past fault by professing zeal exactly where he had failed. Little did he anticipate that a letter meant only for the eyes of Felix was to stand on the indelible page of Holy Writ with the falsehood rendered evident by the history without a word of comment, as is the manner of Scripture. Nor was there the smallest wish in the blessed prisoner to expose the wrong. But God would give us to learn thereby what man is, and what God is, confiding in His care in abhorrence of evil and cleaving to good.

The immense guard provided for the safe conduct of a prisoner, confessedly not guilty of punishment, proved the commander's estimate of Jewish perfidy and violence; and this on the night when his information of their plot was received. How sad to see vindictiveness and deceit in the Jews abhorred and thwarted by heathen resoluteness to stand by earthly righteousness and order. Truly the foundations were out of course: not that the Romans were not evil, but that God's people, the Jews, were yet more deplorably bad.

Nor was Felix the procurator of Judaea ignorant of their moral state, though himself a man of more than usually mean, cruel, and abandoned character. Not only was he married to a Jewish wife, but he seems to have been a joint-governor for years before his promotion to the sole dignity, though herein Tacitus and Josephus clash not a little. During his office he had ample experience of insurrection and of intrigue, of bloodshed and of plots, in dealing with which his servile origin gave only, as is usual, a haughtier tone and stronger impulse to his ruthless policy. Still he easily understood on what slender grounds the Jews might pursue to death an object of their unrelenting

animosity. A Roman governor too was not to be less firm in upholding Roman law in the presence of Jews who boasted of a divine revelation. All this God's providence used in favor of His servant. The notion that so large a retinue was intended as a special honor of Christ's minister is a blunder, from not seeing that the true glory of the Christian is in conformity to Christ's cross.

"The soldiers therefore, as it was commanded them, took up Paul and brought [him] by night unto Antipatris. But on the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him and returned to the castle; and they, when they entered into Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, presented Paul also to him And when he had read [it] and asked of what province he was, and understood that he was of Cilicia, I will hear thee fully, said he, when thine accusers also are arrived. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's praetorian" (Acts 23:31-35).

The description is vivid, as we ordinarily find in the narrative of Luke. Kefr-Saba was the ancient name of the city whence the foot-soldiers returned, as all danger of ambush or pursuit was then past. When Herod rebuilt it, he called the new city Antipatris, in honor of his father. It was some twenty-six miles from Caesarea, but considerably more from Jerusalem, even by the direct route through Gophna, discovered by Dr. Eli Smith, with many a mark of Roman use. The Jerusalem Itinerary makes the distance of Caesarea from Jerusalem sixty-eight miles, but this was the more circuitous route by Bethhoron and Lydda. Nowhere did Herod lavish such effort to render a city magnificent. It is now an utter ruin. There the apostle remained a prisoner for years before he was sent on to Rome. But of this we are to hear more in the history that follows.

Acts 24:1-9

Religious rancor is prompt and indefatigable. Disappointed of its prey by lawless violence, it loses no time in availing itself of legal processes, where unscrupulous abuse may succeed, even if the judge were not venal but only disposed, like human nature in general, to take the popular side against the righteous and godly.

“And after five days came down the high priest Ananias with certain elders and an orator, one Tertullus; and they [the which] laid an information before the governor against Paul. And when he was called, Tertullus began to accuse, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great peace, and by thy providence reforms are made for this nation, we accept [it] every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. But that I be not further tedious to thee, I entreat thee to hear us briefly in thy clemency. For we found this man a pest, and moving insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world [inhabited earth], and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, who also attempted to profane the temple; whom we also seized [and would have judged according to our law. But Lysias the commander [or chiliarch] came and with great violence took [him] away from our hands, commanding his accusers to come onto thee]; from whom thou wilt be able by examining thyself to take knowledge of all these things of which we accuse him. And the Jews joined in the attack, asserting that these things were so” (Acts 24:1-9).

The importance attached to the trial is evident from the going down of the high priest so great a distance and with so little delay, though we may well receive the more ancient witnesses which speak only of certain elders, instead of the Sanhedrim as a whole as in the Received Text. But the more modern copies in this case present without doubt the more difficult reading. Had the authorities been reversed, the critics would probably have regarded τιν■ν as a softened correction of τ■ν.

The orator from his name (a diminutive of Tertius like many others so formed in Latin) seems to have been one of the young Romans or Italians found wherever there was a court of justice in the provinces; and the Jews in all probability employed him as being versed in the methods of procedure before the governor. Certainly his opening is as servile as his statement is false and scurrilous. The flattery of Felix is in flagrant contrast with the grave censure of the historian Tacitas (Ann. 12. 54, H. 5. 9, as referred to naturally), while there was enough in the vigorous putting down of plotters and rebels to give some semblance of reason. What the alleged ameliorations or good measures were does not appear. Josephus does not differ from the Romans in an evil report of Felix, who only escaped condemnation for his misgovernment in Syria through the influence of his brother Pallas with Nero.

“Providence” is given here, rather than “forethought,” as it was apparently borrowed from the application of the more high-sounding term, common on the imperial coins, as Eckhel shows in his “Doctrina Vet. Num.” passim.

Having thus and yet more grossly sought to conciliate the governor, Tertullus turns to the calumniating of Paul after verse 4. He represents the apostle, not merely by the vague but most injurious appellation of a pest or pestilent fellow, but more definitely as moving seditions among all the Jews throughout the world, notoriously open to such mischievous excitement beyond all others through their untoward circumstances as well as their presence everywhere since their dispersion. Next, he taxes Paul as an heresiarch, or rather sectarian chief, employing here only in the N. T. against the Christians that name of contempt which they fixed.

The bracketed passage may be questioned fairly. It is omitted by the witnesses of chief value, and consequently is not received by the Editors, Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, as Mill and Bengel before them. Alford writes andecidedly. Undoubtedly the variations are great in the manuscripts which have the substance. De Wette represents a class of men usually bold; but here it is admitted that it is hardly to be supposed that Tertullus should have said so little, or that Luke should have omitted if he said more; and again it is plain that to stop at the seizure of Paul by the Jews, without explaining how he got rid of them and came into the custody of Lysias before being taken to Caesarea, leaves the speech remarkably abrupt. But Alford sees in verse 22 a strong argument for the genuineness of the words in debate, because πα■ ο■, if the words be inserted, refer, naturally to Lysias, and we find Felix there putting off the final hearing and decision till the arrival of Lysias. If the words are not genuine, πα■ ο■ would rather refer to Paul which the Dean considers unlikely. Others on the contrary allow that at an anacrisis, or first hearing, this is quite correct, and altogether independent of torture, which in the case of a Roman was of course illegal. More might be added in evidence of the uncertainty which hangs over the bracketed words; but it seems unedifying to say more, if one cannot adduce proof enough to clear up the question either way. Abridgment is at least a rare fault in the copyists, who were more prone to venture on insertions in order to ease the sense when it seemed obscure.

It is sad to see how contemptible the Jewish party, high priest and elders, made themselves, even in Roman eyes, through spite against the gospel (Acts 24:9). There they all were not only assenting to the base servility and downright falsehood of Tertullus (indeed they had instructed him), but now they joined in his attack against all truth and justice. And so the Lord had forewarned His followers. “Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecute Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for My name’s sake; because they know not Him that sent Me” (John 15). Yes, there is the secret. The people who claimed to be His witnesses, and were so responsibly, knew Him not, and proved it by rejecting Him Who is the image of the invisible God, the True and Faithful Witness, His only and Beloved Son. Hence their enmity against a servant of His, who made their consciences feel the truth they could not overthrow and would not believe or confess. Deadly hatred ensues: the way of Cain against the accepted and righteous Abel, which stops not short of death. Therefore the Lord went on to say in John 16, “They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father nor Me.”

It has been not otherwise in Christendom, and from the same source. Men have gone back to Jewish elements (now no better than Gentile idols, as the apostle tells us in Gal. 4), and lost all true knowledge of the Father and the Son, as well as of all gospel privilege and blessing. This has ever led to enmity against those who abide in the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. For

man is at bottom the same every where and at all times. But far be it from the Christian to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to him, and he unto the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Gal. 6:14-16).

Acts 24:22-27

The procurator had more now to help him than his considerable experience of the Jews in the past. He had just heard an eminently and transparently truthful reply of Paul to the speech of Tertullus. He could well enough have decided on the merits of it, had it pleased him. But he was a governor as well as judge, and had to do with a people ever refractory. Policy dictated his course, not justice, as too often happens in this world, to say nothing of the heathenism of the Romans and the unscrupulousness of Felix in particular. Bright the day, when judgment shall return to righteousness. Even now, though Christianity has raised the moral standard of men in certain respects, we are far from that day when a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes rule in judgment.

Nor does the gospel indeed propose any such present amelioration of the world. It is the proclamation of grace to the ungodly in the name of Jesus, which shows us the heavens opened for all that believe made one with Him glorified above. The Christian is called therefore to glory in nothing but the cross of Christ, whereby he is crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to him. There is no common ground therefore possible between the world and the Christian if consistent. For the world adjudged to a death of guilt and shame and suffering Him Whom the Christian confesses as the Lord of glory, alone righteous, holy, and true. The world would cease to be the world if in deed and in truth it confessed Him. Not only so: the Christian sees in the cross not only the world's misjudgment of the only worthy One, but God's judgment of himself as only and altogether evil before Him, but that evil laid on Christ to be not only judged but effaced righteously. And he sees further the unbelieving world judged with its prince, though the inevitable and irreversible sentence be not executed till the Lord Jesus appear in His glory, and we too along with Him in the same glory. Thus separation from the world is alone according to truth for the Christian, as the world abides the sure object of divine vengeance. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?"

It was this that made Felix unjust toward Paul as it had decided Pilate to let the Lord Jesus suffer. "But Felix, having more accurate knowledge concerning the Way, adjourned them, saying, When Lysias the commander [or, chiliarch] is come down, I will determine your matter. And he ordered the centurion that he should be kept in charge and should have indulgence; and not to hinder any of his friends from ministering to him" (Acts 24:22-23). The latitude allowed indicated not obscurely the mind of the unjust judge, if he had chosen to judge according to his convictions. But we learn also how God took care of His servant, and, while granting him to suffer for Christ's sake, assuaged the captivity through the judge himself, not on His servant's petition. Truly all things work together for good to them that love God, Who is honored by their faith.

"And after certain days Felix, having arrived with Drusilla his wife being a Jewess, sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. And as he reasoned concerning righteousness and temperance and the judgment to come, Felix became terrified and answered, For the present go; and when I get a convenient season, I will send for thee, hoping at the same time that money

would be given him by Paul; wherefore also he sent for him the oftener and communed with him. But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and Felix, willing to gain favor with the Jews, left Paul in bonds" (Acts 24:24-27).

The essence of unbelief is that, even if God be owned in word or theory, He is in fact wholly excluded. And so it was evident in the next incident, where Felix with the beautiful wife of Azizus, king of the Emesenes, whom he had seduced and taken as "his own," had the apostle before them to hoar of the faith in Christ. Little was the guilty Roman prepared for the many sides of the truth, which the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven turns to deal with the hearer as he is. Paul discoursed, not on the prophets as with Jews, nor on the resurrection as with Athenians, nor on the cross even as at Corinth, but about righteousness, and self-control, and the coming judgment. A bad woman, they say, is more shameless than a bad man. Certainly if Drusilla knew more than Felix, she appears to have felt less. The inspiring Spirit records the alarm of the man, not of the woman. But it was no more than a passing terror. There was no repentance toward God: else he would not have got rid of the searching yet saving word of the gospel; he would not have been content to wait for a "more convenient season," which never really comes. But a baser motive rises up to prompt frequent interviews afterward—that love of money which is a root of all evil. Therefore was it Paul's lot to remain a prisoner for two years of enforced separation from those active and free and wide labors of love so precious to his spirit, because Christ filled him to overflowing. But the same Christ strengthened him to accept his bonds patiently, as Felix fully proved his depravity. Indeed he was only screened from the just punishment of his manifold atrocities by the influence of his brother with the emperor.

Chapter 28

Agnosticism: Part 1

It is well observed that Mr. Spencer's array of objects not knowable might at first sight seem appalling, not a few hoping that “theology,” veiling revealed truth, might perish, after so great a philosopher had pronounced any personal God unknowable.

But first, is it true that “time,” “space,” “earth,” “solar systems,” “universe,” “matter,” “wind,” “force,” “motion,” “self,” are unknowable? As to all these, his books are simply ingenious puzzles. Having quite bewildered himself, he lays his confusion down as the end of controversy for all mankind: “total ignorance,” “a choice between opposite absurdities,” “absolutely unknown,” “inconceivable,” &c. This jargon is the more welcome, because behind it all lies the burning desire to get rid of God as above all unknowable.

Secondly, were it true that all these things, so important in a thousand ways, are above the ken of man, the most ignorant believer has the assurance that he does know God, because He has revealed His mind in His word, Himself in His Son the Lord Jesus.

Mr. Spencer confounds reality of knowledge with power to explain and to prove it. One may be absolutely certain—certain of what he cannot demonstrate, as is the case with axiomatic truths. It is Mr. S.'s system that is unreal. He is as sure of time, space, &c., as all the world he dubs unphilosophic. His self-mystification which the fanatics of skepticism (his own school especially) regard as wisdom, is really his folly and shame, not without moral mischief in result if not in design. “Things did not make Time and Space. Before the hills they were; the birth-day of each separate world was a point, its birth-place a point in space. These two arenas of the universe are things but not body, things but not mind, things but not spirit. Space is the arena for bodies, forces, and motions. Time is the arena for events, including all thoughts, places, deeds, and records; all play of forces, birth of bodies, sweep of motions, and every phase of change” (Arthur, 178).

Not that the Agnostic excludes the study of origins like the Positivist; but he is averse to the Originator, and severs cause from will and intention, because it points to a First Cause, and this a Person. They are alike guilty of the fallacy, that “because a phenomenon is a thing, a thing is a phenomenon” (ib. 184), as with many others counted philosophers, who see not different orders of “laws” for different orders of agents, physical, moral or spiritual, temporal or everlasting. “So far from regarding that which transcends phenomena as the All-Nothingness, I regard it as the All-Being. Everywhere I have spoken of the Unknowable as the Ultimate Reality in the sole existence: all things present to consciousness being but shows of it. Mr. Harrison entirely inverts our relative positions. As I understand the case, the 'All-Nothingness' is that phenomenal existence in which M. Comte and his followers profess to dwell” (Sp. in Nineteenth Cent. No. 89, p. 6). Mr. A. says justly, “Positivism, to make man all in all, makes God a chimera, a fiction; Agnosticism, to make an Ultimate Reality an unknowable power all in all, makes man and nature a mere show, an All-Nothingness; Christianity makes God all in all, with nature a real world around man and under God Mr. Spencer formally rejects any imputation of intending his religion to call us to worship, or to bring in either spiritual comforts or moral strength. His expectation of making this

supplant Christianity is grounded on his being able to make it appear that God is not a living Creator and Ruler of men, men, but that all things are mere shows of one being, itself a stream, an energy, a power, a substratum, or anything, so long as you admit that it has not personality or intelligence, or any of the attributes usually assigned to God."

Mr. A. grapples fairly and conclusively with the Agnostic sophism about "motion" in his Chapter 2. 195-222, showing it to be a connecting link between mind and matter, and what motions are calculable, what not. Mr. S. of course knows and says, "motion is change of place"; but this is private and personal common sense: philosophically motion must be not only unknown but unknowable! What of motion in vegetation? in travel by sea or land? in the labors of peace or war? in the animal realm? in mechanics? in chemistry? in the fine arts? If Mr. Spencer dreams between "improbabilities of thought," mankind lives in a constant activity of achievement, so much so that the Cosmos would be a chaos without true, however partial and imperfect, knowledge of motion. "The countless number of motions originated by men on any given day, pre-determined by them so as to harmonize with other motions, some their own, some proceeding from sources independent of them; these motions taken with their intercrossing's, their compoundings, their separations, and their fruitful effects, are demonstrations, surpassing any requirements of evidence, that the mind of man has some true knowledge of motion, and that he has over it the mysterious power of originating and stopping it, as well as that of guiding and bending it while in flight. That he knows it to perfection even a child would not say. That he does not know it at all, is too poor a saying to become an intelligent child" (pp. 204, 205).

Mr. Spencer puts the case (First Principles, §17) of a ship sailing west, and the captain walking on it east, at the same rate of speed, compounding this compared motion yet further by the motion of the earth round its axis from west to east, hundreds of times faster; and this again by the motion of the earth in its orbit in the opposite direction sixty or seventy times faster than the last motion; and this finally by the motion of the solar system which carries the earth toward some point in the constellation Hercules. From all this Mr. Spencer infers that the captain is stationary, "though to all on board he seems to be moving." How absurd is this quasi scientific trifling! "The illusiveness is not in the eyes of the people on board, but in the fog-signals of the philosopher. Sight reports a man moving from stem to stern, and a man then moving from stem to stern there is in reality. Sight tells the truth respecting him equally well as it tells it respecting the other men who sit still. Sight does not say that this motion of the man from stem to stern is the sum of all motion that affects the vehicle in which he is being carried—affects its relations to the surface of the earth, to the solar system, to the stellar universe. Sight has comparatively little part in these questions. It sees what it sees, reports it, and makes reason aware by its report that man is born to move under more power than he sees, and is led by those powers; and that where sight ends, these his relations, his interests, his means of knowing, are only at their starting-point. The man is motionless! because forsooth the ship goes west as fast as he goes east, and carries him with her. If stationary means motionless—and that would be the only relevant meaning in the present case—he would not be even stationary, but the opposite of stationary; for he is constantly changing places. If stationary means remaining over the same part of the earth's surface, then a pendulum is stationary, but not motionless; soldiers marking time are stationary, but not motionless; and a tree swaying is stationary, but not motionless."

It is plain that the motions are all real motions; it is only Mr. Spencer's ideas which are illusive; and the only element of truth in the pretended proof is that the motions we see are not all that are taking place. He misuses the knowledge of the unseen to make out our nescience of the seen; whereas we ought rather to rise from the little we see to learn how much there is beyond our sight. But are these higher motions of which he speaks unknown to Mr. Spencer? He has no doubt of them whatever, any more than educated men in general. Is this “total ignorance”? Are they inconceivable? Or is not Mr. Spencer's philosophy, like many an ancient as well as modern system, a juggle of thoughts and words?

Mr. A. is not less cutting on Mr. Spencer's shallow criterion of knowledge, a mere ability to picture the form and color of an object in the imagination, as when a piece of rock is instanced, “its top, its sides, and its under surface, at the same time or nearly at the same time.” A geologist certainly would reckon all this with nothing “like completeness.” Nor can there be a plainer case of stultification than Mr. Spencer's attempt to show “self” unknowable. “If the object perceived be self, what is the subject of the perceiver?” As if the subject could not be its own object, pace Dean Mansell; as if men were not their own objects at every hour or moment they are not asleep. To those lost in their metaphysical reveries, this is held to be the annihilation of both subject and object; whereas consciousness of self is the commonest and surest of facts for the simple and the sage alike. Even the dullest of men knows that, if he knows little of aught else. To deny it leaves the fact as plain and constant and necessary as ever; it annihilates neither subject nor object, but only the claims of such as Mr. Spencer to expound a true philosophy, even in every day's personal experience.

Further, it is false “that all science is prevision,” that “an object is said to be little known when it is alien to objects of which we have had experience, and it is said to be well-known when there is great community of attributes between it and objects of which we have had experience;” and that “mind is unclassable and therefore unknowable.” God is thus radically excluded. Mr. Spencer can make himself known, and widely, by his written thoughts, as in a narrow circle by his words and ways; but God cannot reveal Himself! He is unknowable! The First Cause, the Infinite, the Absolute, to be known at all, must be classed (First Princ., 81). Then is He not the only true God, without the knowledge of Whom, by and in Christ, eternal life cannot be; Nothing remains for the sinner but the blackness of darkness forever. Into this, through unbelieving rejection of God's grace and truth, Mr. Spencer's self-confidence directly tends to plunge himself and his followers.

In Chap 4: 271-312 the question is discussed, “Is not all our knowledge Partial, and yet real?” Thus to state it goes far to an answer. Knowledge may be true as far as it goes, while much passes our measure; it is shown to be by instinct, by consciousness, by sense, by intuition, by science, by testimony. “Very different is the aspect assumed by partial knowledge when once its validity is admitted. We then cease to have any suspicion of being a sport of mocking somethings, or mocking nothings, which illude us with ideas that we are, that we think, that we know, and that our actions are pregnant with vast meanings and issues, whereas we are but infinitesimal fractions of an All-nothingness. We then feel ourselves to be a reality—a small but still a significant reality; girt round about on every hand by relations and beings, all realities possessing a significance ever ascending, the whole being embraced in the arms of one Infinite Life and Truth. Existence real, matter real, life real, mind real, force real, motion real, man real, God real; thought itself ceases to be idle phantasm, and the soul of man itself may look upwards and breathe a morning air that

inspires him for an everlasting ascent” (iv. 304).

(To be continued.)

Chapter 29

Agnosticism: Part 2

Mr. Spencer's doctrine of illusion and phenomena is dealt with in Chap. 5. “Is a thing identical with its own appearances?” To put the question is to refute the assumption, save to such as repeating a falsehood for years believe it at length. Mr. A. takes gravitation as a plain disproof, a certain fact that appears not; and again ether, a necessary condition of appearances. “They become known to us, not by being shown to any organ of sense, but by force of evidence collected from all points of the field of observation.” “When things that do not make any appearance are called phenomena, it is by a use of language looser than when thinkers mean work..... Though these non-appearing realities wait in their silent abodes to be felt after and found by the spirit of man, the innumerable phenomena of which they are either the condition or the cause constantly point up to them. To all men except philosophers Appearances intelligibly announce their place and mission in the general system of things. To ordinary people it seems to be a fact upon the face of nature that the Appearance fills an appointed place as a messenger of knowledge between a body and a mind; in a manner in which the word holds its place between one mind and another. Many as are the strong points of a body, it has no inheritance in the Logos. It cannot learn a language, and it cannot speak or be spoken to. By other bodies this would never be deplored; for to them it is no defect..... Here then enters the Appearance, having its office and nature well defined. Just as speechless matter could not make itself known to mind without some such method of appearances; so mind could not itself command language without some such method. An Appearance is a combination whereby a body shoots forth from itself into a mind the announcement: Here I am. Except to a mind it can make no such announcement. The appearance also affords some clue as to what kind of an I is the one so announced” (pp. 314-316).

“Now is an appearance to be confounded with the thing that makes it, any more than a word is with the speaker? Yet while we should not call both orator or oration speech, we do habitually call both an appearance and the substance which makes it phenomena. Why philosophers should exercise such feats of writing over what to ordinary persons would appear as plain as nature can make it, is not for us to say. We must deferentially accept their prodigious paragraphs as throes of the evolution from well-digested common thought into purely technical formulas. Nevertheless, we shall never be content to regard, say, a peacock and the appearance as one and the same thing. We shall not be persuaded that on a pitch-dark night when he makes no appearance there is any less of him or any different form of him from what existed at golden noon when he dazzled the beholders. We shall not believe that it makes the difference of a feather to his frame whether the beholders are a wren and a yellow-hammer, or a whole school of children. Let those who think it philosophic call him, and not merely his appearance, a phenomenon. We shall call him a peacock—a peacock when he makes a phenomenon, and as much a peacock when he does not appear” (p. 319).

Next, Mr. A. asks, Are phenomena disguises? Mr. Spencer, in his Classification of the Sciences, says that “Science is that which treats of the forms in which phenomena are known to us,” and elsewhere “of the phenomena themselves.” What does this mean but the forms of forms? “It may

seem at first sight hard to believe, but what he really intended is that science treats of things, with time and space. Kant had called time and space forms of thought, to which Mr. Spencer demurs, and calls them forms of things. But in his formula he does not call things things but phenomena, and consequently makes time and space forms of phenomena. One thing however is manifest that for Mr. Spencer things are phenomena and the forms of things are time and space. Here comes boldly into view the conception of Mr. Spencer as to the place and office of phenomena or appearances. He usually contrasts phenomenon and reality, not phenomenon and substance. This assumes that the phenomenon is not a reality; whereas be it an appearance, an image, a reflection, or even a shadow, it is a reality as truly as the substance it discloses: “The shadows on the sun dial have played the part of important realities in many a juncture of urgency” (pp. 320-323).

SCIENCE IS

I. That which treats of the forms in which phenomena are known to us.

A. Abstract Science

i. Logic

ii. Mathematics

II. That which treats of the phenomena themselves.

A. In their elements

i. Abstract concrete science

a. Mechanics

b. Physics

c. Chemistry, &c.,

B. In their totalities

i. Concrete Science

a. Astronomy

b. Geology

c. Biology

d. Psychology

e. Sociology, &c.

“To keep our own point of view, we do not note in these two groups of studies any other feature than this, that the objects of knowledge are so described as to throw out in high relief Mr. Spencer's doctrine that phenomena are not revealing messengers, but disguises.” Appearances he will have to be illusive. So he reasons, as others before, on “the looking-glass.” Now what this proves is simply that first impressions need to be checked; which is true of touch as well as of

sight, and no less of mental impressions, as Mr. A. shows. Even at the first the looking-glass conveys true if imperfect information; it is only subordinate traits which are illusive. “The glass shows the appearance of a man; and a man there is. What is in fault is not sight, but inexperience..... A few repetitions of the experience enable us to distinguish these traits, and to discriminate between a direct appearance of a man and one reflected. This is correction by sight itself, not by touch. Sight told true. It shewed what was to be shown. A man is present, otherwise never would the glass give the reflection—never would the eyes see it” (p. 326).

“It is obvious that the question, whether appearances disguise realities or reveal them, involves the truthfulness of the whole system of communication in nature..... The reality of the knower and the distinction between him and the things to be made known are both implied in the supposition of a scheme of illusory communications as well as in that of a scheme of truthful ones Therefore the idea that a system of illusion clears the way to the doctrine of universal identity, by destroying the reality of supposed persons and things, is superficial. Persons and things are as real when disguising themselves by false appearances, as when manifesting themselves by true ones. Persons deceived by disguises are as real as persons informed by frank appearances” (p. 328).

Clearly if phenomena disguise, instead of revealing, knowledge is impossible even to man endowed with mental powers beyond other creatures on earth; phenomena would be worse than useless. It is the Maya that snits an Oriental Pantheist, as Mr. A. argues, not an observer unprepared for its moral and social corollaries. Brahm in that scheme is alone the true existence, and man peculiarly under illusion who thinks of himself as separate from Brahm, the ever-acting power, who wishes, designs, discriminates and causes (Bhagavat Gita, § x.; Upanishads), though inconsistently man bears the penalty of demerit, and has pain and pleasure, while God does all. This is not universal identity. Such “inconsistency is far from being the effect of a transient lapse of attention. It has a far deeper cause. The reality of which phenomena are the appearances are not to the Agnostic, as to us, a substance proper to each thing taken individually and specially indicated by appropriate appearances. On the contrary, the Reality is one universal substance, sole and continuous in time, sole and continuous in space, which appears within us, which appears without, which is in itself the All-Being. Hence appearances are not truly appearances, but disguises—the antitheses of appearances, which are the manifestations of one person to another, or of a thing to a person; whereas disguises are expedients for preventing an appearance from conveying the truth; and in the case supposed for deceiving parts of the same being by giving them an impression that they are distinct from the whole, and hold intercourse with it. If there is in existence but one substance, and no other being to which it can be manifested, and if all appearances are no more than tremors in that one substance, then manifestly each appearance indicative of a separate individual, is a sheer delusion, and phenomena in the total are properly called all-nothingness. They may seem to be heavens and earth, forces and motion, form and thought, war and repose, but they are only curls of foam on the same stream; not even that—all only oscillations on the same cord; not even that—they are All-nothingness.

“This conception, so closely allied to the Pantheistic one, carries with it the same broad incongruity which encumbers that theory. How can nothingness be deluded? how can it think, how imagine that things appear to it? How can it meet one appearance by suppressing it, and another by rendering it permanent? How can nothingness construct Synthetic Philosophies? Although Mr. Spencer groups together all kinds of phenomena under the one heading of All-Nothingness, it is to

be said that he does not believe in two kinds of nothing. A noteworthy argument of his for refusing to look upon time and space as nonentities is that to do so involves the absurdity that there are two kinds of nothing. Perhaps it only involves the assertion that two things of which people speak are both nothing. One may say that a griffin is nothing, and that a phoenix is nothing, without believing in two kinds of nothing. But sorely two kinds of it need not embarrass one who can put all phenomena into the category of nothingness. If men and cattle, fields and farming implements, are all so much differentiated nothingness, surely there must be a considerable variety of nothings" (pp. 337-9).

Chapter 30

Agnosticism: Part 3

Mr. A. justly argues against the falsehood that the senses are set for our illusion, and shows that the palate is our veracious alimentary sense, touch mechanical, smell sanatory, hearing social, and sight our cosmic sense. “All and every one, the senses are servants of light for us, not darkness; servants of a King who dwells in light, and not of a grim something which hides among phantasms..... Every sense proclaims its own office to be partial: color is inaudible, sound is intangible, taste is invisible; all objects have properties which elude all the five senses, and yet those which are discovered by them are truly known. 'In part' is inscribed on the dome and the foundations of the temple of knowledge, and covers all its walls.”

Then he asks, “What is a living body? According to the prince of the Positivists a living body is one that absorbs and exhales. This is just what air has always been doing by day and by night; absorbing and exhaling water, heat, and other things as well. According to the prince of Agnostics, a living body is one which effects a continues adjustment of internal relations to external relations.” Now of all things air is just such a body. Its internal relations are those of oxygen to nitrogen and carbon, and these are adjusted to the external relations of heat, light, water, plants, lungs, gills, wings, and hosts of other things. They are ‘continuously' adjusted, with a continuity which makes the adjustments of sleep or nutrition seem intermittent, and with a long-established continuity which makes the oldest animal or even plant appear of low antiquity. Yet neither by its absorbing and exhaling, nor by its continuous adjustment, does air evolve organs of sense and perception

“We say it cannot produce these organs. A stone could do as much towards producing a peacock's voice as can a peacock. A fowl could do as much towards producing for itself human lungs as a man. Yet in man absence of this power to produce living organs is coupled with the power of supplementing with inanimate ones those which have been bestowed upon him, so that he is able to lighten bodily labor, and at the same time to increase the work done. This is a fact so conspicuous and so rich in results that, instead of all notions having mechanical equivalents and effects on a calculable scale, it may be taken as a principle that when the human frame moves under trained intellect, the expenditure of mechanical force lessens in proportion as the power of accomplishing work increases.

“What is involved in the existence of an organ? It manifestly involves a co-ordination in successive stages: first, as between observer and organ; secondly as between observer, organ, and medium; thirdly, as between observer, organ, medium, and object. A failure at any point in this group of co-ordinations, and no knowledge could result. If it is to be a case of sight, no object upon earth can show itself to us. No combination of human powers can show it without light. That medium is both a substance and a motion in that substance, ether and undulation of ether. The undulation has to come far and to cross other substances on its way. It is not one motion, not one rate of motion. All this co-relation has to be sustained at every point on the way up to our atmosphere, and from the time when that is entered upon has to be further complicated by new co-relations,.... It is easy to say that what is objectively motion is subjectively thought. Where is it subjectively

thought? wherever the notions strike? Nay! Where is it subjectively human thought? anywhere but in a human mind? What is objectively motion is subjectively thought, hence the distinction between observer and object is needless! Is the motion of the sunbeams ever thought when they light on a stone or a pond?..... Are the motions of sunbeams ever turned into thought when they fall on the plumage of a bird or the fur of a squirrel? They absolutely reveal nothing to the feathers, nothing to the hairs, but when shot against the retina they reveal what makes bird or squirrel glad or fearful... The motions are constituted an object only by the presence of an observer; and, the observer present, the motions are not the principal object, but only a link between him and it. In fact, speaking of what is objectively motion, pre-supposes what it is intended to do away with, mind. No motion is objective to mindless things, nor to anything but mind no mind, no object."

So it is with the organs of the other senses. "Phenomena are not disguises; and the impressions they give us are not delusions." The chapter ends with a passage of Mr. Spencer (Princ. of Psych. i. p. 500, § 219), in which he will have the ego to be not a person, but "nothing more than the composite state of consciousness."

Mr. A.'s next chapter (6.) is on the question of necessity and free will—a delicate subject for one of his peculiar views. He is thoroughly right in exposing the error common to both Positivists and Agnostics, of putting all beings, animated or inanimate, rational or not, under physical laws, and the special inconsistency of one who like Mr. Spencer makes states of consciousness so all-important in making them illusive. Thus is motive confounded with motive power, which Mr. A. uses a donkey and a donkey-cart to disprove. Mr. Spencer as usual stands on his favorite dilemma. "Psychical changes either conform to law, or they do not. If they do not conform to law, this work, in common with all work on the subject, is sheer nonsense. No science of psychology is possible. If they do conform to law, there cannot be any such thing as free will" (Princ. of Psych. p. 220). Mr. A's answer is, some do conform and some do not. Both horns of the dilemma are blunt. If the actions done in England do not conform to law, there can be no good citizens, and if they do, there can be no culprits. Error in thought and feeling, wrong in action, are facts, which all possible metaphysical puzzles will never keep out of sight, even though the dilemma as innocently begs the question as Mr. Spencer's do inordinately often. Law has not the same nature or hence meaning in morals as in physics. It is illogical therefore to reason for men or even brutes from the world of physics and the laws of matter. If things and people, follow an inevitable order by invariable law, where is right and where is wrong? Is the difference between an involuntary and a voluntary deed "nothing else than a nascent excitation of the nerves?" In such a case the Vedic hymn would be true: "It was not our doing, O Varuna! it was necessity." Mr. Spencer can twit Hume with making a sum total of impressions and ideas; but how can he escape no less censure himself for making man at any given moment only an aggregate of passing states which determine action? The true questions are, Of what is it a. state? and what state is it? Agnosticism thus denies man as well as God any proper intelligence, will, or personality. It is all a waste of blind fatalism.

But dismissing this folly and evil, is it true that "free" is consistent with "will"? or are they not as inconsistent as "Catholic" with "Roman," or Protestant rights with Christian obedience? Is there will till a man is determined?

When man was set innocent in Eden, he had a sphere placed under him and was free to act there as lord of all given him by God, his obedience tested by a single restraint, which thrown off brought

in death on him and all his subjected realm. It was no question of the knowledge of good and evil in a fallen world, with all the moral play which this involves. Conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity, I am begotten again by the word of truth, and now live of a divine life, to do God's will, not mine. The Christian has a nature corresponding with the order in which he stands, and owns gladly his obligation to do God's will. This is the law of liberty of which the Epistle of James speaks. The believer is free to serve God, delivered from his old bondage whatever it might be; yet is he brought and bound to do, not his own will, but God's, which is ever the will of the new man. Free to choose is all false. It was not Adam's case, where there was no conflict of evil with good; it is not in ours. Fallen unconverted man has a will of his own to act independently of God and His word: this is sin. It is lawlessness, law or no law. In Christ was no sin: not only He did and knew no sin, but there was none in His humanity. Indeed He was born “holy,” as Adam even when freshly created was not, but only innocent. When fallen, and not yet born of God, man determines without reference to God, which is nothing but sin, and, for those under law, transgression. In such circumstances the pretension to independency is the rejection of God and of His authority. When converted, the will is set right, though lusts remain, and deliverance in power is needed: life alone is not enough, as Rom. 7 teaches. But the renewed “I” always seeks to please God; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Natural man is Satan's bondman this is not freedom; and one's own will is evil continually, because it is never obeying God.

Freedom from compulsion is of course allowed on all hands, save by infidel minds. Indifference is not truly the state of man, either natural or renewed, and indeed would mean no will: the one is inclined to evil, the other to good. Conscience is not will. It may warn, but is powerless. Grace alone acts effectually by faith.

In God only can we rightly speak of free will. He is absolutely free to do as He sees fit, and never pleases to do save what is good and holy. With the creature it is wholly different; his only place is obedience. God can create, the creature is acted on by motives. It is true that God never hindered his choosing the good, or compelled his choice of evil, any more than He made it impossible for him to fall. It is one thing to be free from external restraint, another to be free internally, which no sinner is. Man indeed never was the blank sheet which the speculative imagine: innocent, he was inclined to good; fallen, to evil. When converted and delivered in Christ, there is not only life, but power.

We need not dwell on Mr. Spencer's view of the origin of the Universe, which Mr. A. discusses in his chapter 7. Creation out of nothing does not mean by nothing, which is truly unthinkable, but by God, the Everlasting Being; and this alone satisfies. Even Mr. S. confesses “It is impossible to avoid making the assumption of self-existence somewhere.” Just so; reason shows there must be God; revelation, Who and what He is, as well as that He is. And who could reveal God but Himself, directly or indirectly? It is ridiculously false to say that this is impossible in thought or fact. To treat matter and mind as practically identical is irrational to the last degree, which is eluded, not faced, by calling these “proximate activity,” though the phenomena are essentially diverse. Alike from God, they are totally different in themselves. It is here that Mr. Spencer's “illusion” enters, which, if true, would make all science impossible. Mr. A.'s conclusion is: “The supposition of an Eternal Nothing which produced both mind and matter is unbelievable and inconceivable. The supposition of Eternal matter which produced mind is unbelievable. The supposition of Eternal Mind which produced both matter and finite mind is conceivable and believable, according to reason by infinite

weight and probability." It may be well to add that reasoning can only give us a conclusion. Observation gives facts, as in this case divine testimony alone presents the truth to faith. "By faith we understand that the world was framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear."

Chap. 8. Mr. A. entitles "Mr. Spencer's replacement of God." Of this unascertained Something (says Mr. A. p. 479), Mr. Harrison says it is impersonal, unconscious, unthinking and unthinkable; while Sir James Stephen calls it a barren abstraction. Whatever else it is, it is neither God nor man. When Mr. Spencer is on his defense, his struggles to escape from the effect of these negations have no other result than that of working him into positions impossible to be held except on the ground of faith in a living God. A self-evolved universe is the theory of Mr. Spencer. His illustration of mist forming in a clear sky in no true way helps self-evolution, as Mr. A. shows; for it takes for granted water, air, heat, &c. It pre-supposes the concurrent action of heaven and earth. It is the result of a change effected by sundry agents external to itself. What is self-evolved must find within itself the impulses the agents, and the materials of its evolutions. A: self-evolved universe is simply another form of the self-existence of matter. Now we come to the old point in the circle—Given matter, force, and motion, then we begin. Now, who gives the three finites? Finites cannot be self-originated.

The last chap. (9) is "Mr. Spencer's Substitute for Christianity," He confesses religion indestructible, but reduces it to curiosity about the Ultimate Cause, and awe before it. It has neither God to love us, nor love to man. Praise is unknown, as gratitude and service are impossible, and all the springs of moral action—a religion worthy of unbelief.

Chapter 31

On the Doctrine of Balaam

It is a very blessed thing, and a great relief to the saints in Christ, that the path of His sheep is so simple in the mercy and goodness of God. On the one hand there is Christ, Whose voice they know, and Whom they follow as their good shepherd: on the other hand there are strangers, however numerous and various, whose voice they do not know, and whom they will not follow. And the simplest way to detect a stranger's voice is by its contrariety to that of the Good Shepherd.

But while in the knowledge of Christ as our shepherd, strangers, as such, are detected, yet for their particular judgment as they arise and are about to arise, as also for the further security of the saints, it has seemed well unto God to designate them and their followers under sundry characters.

It is rather in connection with the actual necessities and trials of the saints that these things are brought out, than as subjects of profit apart from those trials.

It does not appear the way of God either to dwell upon corrupt evils which do not lie in the way of His saints, or to omit those by which they are in some way endangered, though the reverse of this course sometimes pleases the flesh and leaves the conscience undisturbed.

To dwell on the pure doctrine of Christ is very sweet and comforting to those who know and love Him. Not so with false doctrines and evil people; yet the faithful testimony of the word of Christ about it is wholesome and needful, and the presenting of that testimony may be a service of love ministered in due season, and the fruit of such righteousness may be very peaceful.

Personal feelings should not be allowed to hinder from a course of faithfulness to Christ.

When He addressed the declining churches in Rev. He first acknowledged and commended the good that was there; but He did not overlook the bad of which His servants stood in need of warning or reproof. And as to the circumstances connected with that need, it is to be remarked in the addresses to those seven churches, that the two churches which are not spoken to as assailed by certain special evil persons are the two worst—the church in Sardis, which had a name to live and was dead, and the church in Laodicea, which was lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot. In those churches where the Spirit of the Lord was most in energy, there the wicked one stirred up a counter-energy in special positive opposers: there were those who said they were apostles and were not; there were the Nicolaitanes, whose deeds were worthy of being hated; there were those who said they were Jews and were not—those who held the doctrine of Balaam, and that woman Jezebel who called herself a prophetess.

I would now make a few remarks connected with the doctrine of Balaam and those who hold it, having long desired to do so, and believing such to be one of the special trials of the saints through the power of the enemy and the work of the flesh in this place (Demerara).

It is important to notice in the addresses to the church in Pergamos, that Christ does not charge those that hold fast His name with also holding fast the doctrine of Balaam; neither does He give

any credit to those who hold fast the doctrine of Balaam for holding fast His name also: but He totally disconnects the two parties.

In the doctrine of Balaam there is a strange voice, and Christ's sheep will not own it. “A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.”

He blames His own people for allowing the others among them at all. “I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold (or hold fast) the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.” “Repent; or else I am coming unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth” (Rev. 2:14-16). He says, “I am coming onto thee, and will fight (not against thee, but) against them.”

As to the doctrine itself, it is “the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balac.” It is not the case of a man overtaken in a fault: nor is it the case of those who having committed sin are ready to confess and mourn over it as sin in the presence of the Lord; but it is the ease of those who hold fast sin in the shape of a doctrine. This is a very important distinction. It is the doctrine of Balaam, though I do not believe that those who held it made an open acknowledgment of Balaam in it any more than the Jews did of their father the devil, when they were doing his works and boasting in the names of the children of Abraham and the children of God. But names cannot alter things.

The doctrine is the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. What is it to eat things sacrificed unto idols? Eating is an emblem of participation and communion. As to the idols, we know that covetousness is idolatry: and those things which do not minister to the glory of God, but which yet are delighted in because they minister to what an evil heart of unbelief puts its dependence on instead of putting it on God, are things sacrificed to idols. Therefore, while the scriptures teach that the love of money is the root of all evil, the doctrine of Balaam teaches the very opposite, that it not only is no harm at all, but that it is prudent and praiseworthy. The scripture also teaches that women should adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works (see 1 Tim 9, 10). Such is the doctrine of the sacred scriptures; but whose doctrine is it that teaches that if women acted thus, they would be neglecting their future prospects in life, and that as for this shamefacedness and sobriety, that at least it is not to be valued, but that broidered hair, gold, pearls, and costly array are, more or less, proper adornments? Whose doctrine is this? Is it the doctrine of Christ? But then a person may say, We can hold the doctrine of Christ too. But what does Christ say to His servants? “I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam.” The holders of this doctrine might like to be among those who held Christ's name: but Christ does not allow it. He tells His servants that He is coming to fight against the holders of this doctrine, and that they cannot have such among them.

In the teaching of this doctrine there is also taught to commit fornication. What! Is this a doctrine taught? Yes! It is the doctrine of Balaam, though it may be in a more refined form to deceive the world. I would here quote the words of Christ in Matt. 5:27, 28, marking that it is the doctrine of Balaam that sets those words aside, “Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath

committed adultery with her already in his heart." The doctrine of Balaam may say that this is no harm, that it is quite innocent. But it need not be said to the faithful in Christ Jesus, "Do not hold such doctrine," yet it may be needful to say, "Have no fellowship with those who hold it." Christ is coming to fight against them with the sword of His mouth. If you have an ear to hear, hear what the Spirit saith mite the churches.

I will quote a few scriptures, most important to those who would take heed of the leaven of this doctrine.

Heb. 13:4. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." In what connection does this scripture stand? It comes as a solemn warning against the flesh after the saints had been called to such services of grace, as brotherly love continuing, entertaining strangers, feeling bound with those in bonds: but lest the flesh should come in under the pretext of preserving the continuance of brotherly love, or of the kindly hospitality of entertaining strangers, or of tender sympathy with those in bonds, the apostle immediately adds, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." The doctrine of Balaam in connection with a formal but false profession of Christ, would make a pretext of brotherly love or Christian hospitality for unclean liberties, which even in the world would not be allowed.

1 Tim. 5:1, 2. "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity." To whom are these last words, "with all purity," referred? Let those who would judge the doctrine of Balaam see! The Spirit of God does not give a precept where it is not needed, neither does He withhold one where it is needed. It is the way of the flesh often to do the very reverse. Even Timothy needed this caution!

Titus 2:1-10. In this scripture Titus is instructed by the Apostle in reference to aged men, aged women, young women, young men, and servants; of these five divisions four only are immediately referred to Titus: one of them is not personally committed to him, but to the aged women!

Let the godly take warning in fear and trembling.

How often do aged sisters say, "I am not able to do anything for the Lord." This is a wrong word for any one who knows Him to say: but let the aged sisters know that their age and sex constitute them fit and proper persons to be servants for Christ in many things of great need to some of the exposed ones of His flock.

The godly should not make light of these reserves of manner and watchfulness in the sight of God who has by His Spirit given us the exhortations; and through His grace they will not do so. We will find the experience of every day vindicating the wisdom of God in such words, whether it be in the consistency of those who hold them though often sore beset with trials, or in the failure and breaking down of those who lightly esteem them.

Shocking must it be to those who tremble at God's word, and are the pure in heart, who see Him by faith, to witness the sinful liberties that are too often to be met with under the excuses of "play." So it is play: but remember "The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." And this scripture is quoted by the apostle in warning to us, immediately before the scripture of warning from the scene at Baal-Peon. "Neither let us commit fornication as some of them committed, and

fell in one day three and twenty thousand." In this scripture they who hold the doctrine of Christ are warned against the deeds maintained in the doctrine of Balaam: for the saints need to watch against the flesh in those things which their spiritual judgments and consciences condemn.

One more reference to scripture I would make in consequence of having heard it said, "Why do you make more of this sin than of any other?" An awful word! But the apostle says, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body [and in your spirit, which are God's]" (1 Cor. 6:18-20).

In Acts 15 the brethren were bid to abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication. Why is fornication put here with other things? Because it is the offense to the church of God as blood would be to the Jews, or things offered to idols to the Gentiles: for the character of the church is that of a chaste virgin for, Christ (2 Cor. 11:2, comp. Matt. 25:1, Rev. 19:7). And therefore, while in abstaining from things offered to idols, it would be for conscience not thine own but of another (1 Cor. 10); it would, on the other hand, be for conscience thine own in the fullest possible sense in abstaining from fornication of the slightest degree.

May His blessing attend those few remarks for Christ's sake and to His glory. Amen. T. T.

Chapter 32

Blood on the Mercy Seat

We have in fact the blood on the mercy-seat, and the scapegoat, in Rom. 3; 4 Only the Lord's lot is set out in testimony for us as guilty to come, an ιλαστ■ριον (mercy-seat) through faith in His blood. The scape-goat is as delivered for our offenses (if not raised again for our justification). And propitiation, though in view of God's glory (“among whom I dwell”), still is for sins, as 1 John 2 The Lord's lot was a sin-offering, but in general for God Who was there.

Chapter 33

The Catholic Apostolic Body or Irvingites: 1. Introduction

When it pleased God of late to awaken the slumbering virgins by the midnight cry, not only were the wise roused, but the foolish. Nor did Satan delay to set up counterfeits, so as to bring the discredit of heterodoxy and evils of various other kinds on the recovered hope. Evangelical men were at a manifestly low ebb, even the most devoted of them betraying their ignorance of church or even Christian privilege by periodical gatherings for prayer that the Holy Spirit might be once more shed on souls, and meanwhile eagerly forming societies to do thus anomalously the work which was the common responsibility of God's church. There was no real faith in the presence of the Spirit, no looking for His free action in the assembly, no expression of the one body of Christ, nor even sense of the church's ruin-state, any more than really waiting for God's Son from heaven. There was not even the consciousness of the true deliverance and heavenly associations of the Christian. The evangelical revival, whether of Wesley or of Whitfield, or outside the borders of either, was a pious reaction, which insisted on the new birth and earnestness on behalf of perishing souls, from the cold ethics and formality, if not deism, of the century before. But the calling and the inheritance of saints, the purposes of God for the glory of God in Christ, never fully dawned on evangelical hearts, any more than on Puritans, or even the Reformers that preceded. It is needless to say that it would be vain to look for aught better, or as good, in the middle ages, or among the Fathers. Even redemption in any adequate conception of it had quickly faded away, before men had to contend for the truth of Christ's person or the Holy Ghost. Nobody doubts that grace saved all through; but for more than a dozen centuries where is there a single sentence which proclaims salvation as the apostles once taught and all saints enjoyed?

In such circumstances as these who can wonder that the privileges, either of the individual Christian or of Christ's body the church, were unknown? Hard and narrow Calvinism since the sixteenth century maintained a measure of solid footing for the saint sorely tried under law. Active, warmhearted Arminianism, when it did not lapse into Arianism, went out in zeal personally, and in service of others, but with a minimum of truth, without which one could hardly be saved. Man and the world were unjudged. The assembly of God united to Christ, and the scene of the Spirit's free activity according to the word as a present thing, and even Christian standing, were ignored, the future glories of Christ, as well as the actual bearing of His exaltation, being not at all understood.

The horrors of infidelity, both in its multitudinous excesses and in its rising to a head of despotic self-will, made the Bible, then going forth in active circulation beyond example, dearer to, the children of God, whose consciences began to be searched as to their state and ways by the coming of the Lord, which now became more distinctly, practically, and urgently pressed. The family likeness on a small scale, first to the apostasy, next to the man of sin and son of perdition, could not but arouse thoughtful souls to the still more awful evils disclosed in 2 Thess. 2 which are to call down the Lord's personal judgment at His appearing. Hence was felt increasingly the imperious call to be ready for the Lord when He comes for His own, that they may go in with Him to the marriage feast. Resting on Him and His redemption, they had the oil in their vessels. But had they not departed from the original call to quit “the camp,” to love not the world nor the things

that are in the world? Had they not, in ceasing to go out to meet the Bridegroom, turned in here or there to slumber or sleep? Had they not, on the one hand, failed to resist evil in the church, and, on the other, adopted ways of their own to escape what was gross, with little heed to Christ's will and glory? If He was coming as they hoped, they knew not how soon, it behooved them to be found honoring the word and Spirit of God. They could not but feel that the church was fallen and broken irremediably as a whole: the great eastern and western bodies swamped by idolatry and plain evils, both doctrinal and practical; the lesser Protestant systems, either enslaved to the state, or settled on their differences without a thought of unity, save invisibly or in heaven.

The ruin was complete; but had faith no resource? Was there no provision for the faithful in a state so sinful and hopelessly awry? Had the blessed Lord not foreseen and revealed His will in view of it? They must cease to do evil if they would learn to do well. Obedience is the saving principle that never fails in Old Testament or New, for Jew or Christian. The word made it clear that, whatever the wreck of outward manifestation, there is one body and one Spirit, even as there is one hope of our calling. These abide unchangeably for such as believe. Were the saints content to fall back on the imperishable blessings of the church, clearing themselves from all compromise of the truth, and owning the fidelity of the Lord to His own word? The Spirit, beyond doubt, was sent down to abide in and with the saints forever. He will be poured out afresh on all flesh for the kingdom by and by; but He has not forsaken, and never can, the church, any more than the cloud of divine presence left Israel, yea disobedient and guilty Israel, all the wilderness through. But the time is come when God wakes up His own, and works readiness to receive their returning Lord; and they recall His voice vouchsafing the promise of His presence in the midst, were they but two or three, no longer scattered by the names of leaders or by exalting this doctrine and policy or that, but gathered to (ε■ς) His name.

Hence they judged themselves and their ways, personal, worldly, ecclesiastical, in the light of that word, which also testified the way of obedience that never fails for the single-eyed in the worst of times. For as sure as God, lives, His child never has to choose man's wretched alternative—the less of two evils. There is a way, and it is the way of obedience, of obeying God rather than man, in which the weakest may walk, and the strongest ought to walk. If others turn, as all alas! have turned, to the right and to the left, whatever be the snare, our idol of silver, or our image of gold, Away with it! The written word solves every possible dilemma; but we are wholly dependent on God, Who works in us by His Spirit to exalt the Lord thereby. We have been verily guilty; and repentance, not self-confidence, becomes us. Re-construction is not, nor ever was, God's way for His people in a fallen state. He that doeth the will of God abideth forever. Ceasing from evil in brokenness of spirit, our place is to search the scriptures and find what the Lord reveals there open to saints, whatever be their measure; for we are put members in the body as it pleased Him. God set some in the church: first apostles; secondarily prophets; thirdly teachers; after that miracles; then, gifts of healing, &c. This raises the question of power and authority; and assumption is as dangerous as mistake about them is easy. But obeying God's word is the clear duty of every soul born of God. We are elect through sanctification of the Spirit to obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

Here it was that the divergence ensued among those awakened from slumber Many are the paths of error. There is but one way of truth: it was that of Christ on earth, the obedient One. Power from on high had been already given; and the Spirit sent down from heaven, though our sins be great

and many as they are, has never retired again. He has been grieved in a thousand ways, and has shown His sense of the church's unfaithfulness. But never for a moment has He deserted the post which He deigned to take here below to glorify the Lord Jesus. In obedience we prove His gracious power, and this not in gift individual only, but in communion where we in faith come together to Christ's name in the unity of the Spirit which we are all bound to keep. Those who act obediently have ever found His blessing in it, whatever others may or may not do.

Nor is there a tittle of presumption in obeying God. Therein only is true humility. imitating the apostles is as proud as it is childish; it would be ridiculous, if it were not profane. Men have turned the gifts of Christ, endorsed with the power of God's Spirit, into titles of honor in the world, or of ostentation in a church already Judaized. God has taken care to preserve every privilege good for the saints in lowliness to Christ's glory. Whatever is no longer vouchsafed would be incompatible with the church fallen and scattered as it is. He is as wise in what He withholds, as He is good in what He continues, the state of the church being what it is. Those whose principle it is to obey in the immutable relationships of His grace He has not spared all needed sifting and humiliation, but has largely blessed in an increasing enjoyment of Himself and His word. Such as have set themselves up, coveting power and authority, He has covered with shame in all eyes but their own, perhaps in their own also, if the truth were known.

Mr. Irving and his friends stood on the wholly different ground of ignoring known evil in which they were consciously involved, till God should interfere in power and blessing. This, however seemingly humble after a human sort, was neither faith nor holiness; failure as to which was not repented of as sinful, but virtually set to God's account. Moral responsibility was thus ignored and shirked. They did not judge but accept the unbelief of Christendom in the ever-abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, and prayed (like the evangelicals) for a fresh outpouring; as if God's word were void, and His church had no longer that divine indwelling, without which it is not God's house, and in truth cannot be His church at all. This was to Judaize the assembly. For it is confessed by all who look for the Lord's premillennial advent that the Jews &c. in that day are to be the object of the Spirit's latter rain on the earth.

But the Holy Spirit never left the church since Pentecost. Had it been true, Christ had no longer a body on earth united to Him the Head in heaven. And the error was far more serious in character and consequence for those who professed to be awaiting the Lord from above, as their habitual hope. Others who shared like unbelief meant little more by His outpouring than greatly increased blessing in their own souls, or in conversion at home and abroad. Not so those who (judging Christendom by the light of the word, with the Lord's coming immediately before them) were as loud as men could be in denouncing the various denominations as only so many streets of Babylon. Yet from their incurably vicious starting-point, those who were crying loudly for the Spirit to come down afresh were as urgent as the idolaters of succession and tradition, that men who saw the abominations they shared should remain where they were till God appeared in power, as their selfish unbelief expected. Even after they had had certain strange manifestations in Port Glasgow, London, &c., they still held to the same evil principle, and insisted on all over whom they had influence, that none should abandon the evil under which they groaned, till they had received manifestations of power like their own. Obedience, the uniform principle of the Christian's life, as it was in all perfection seen only in our Lord, was not at all in their counsels and conduct, but really though unwittingly denied by them.

It was just about the same time that God began to impress on some of His children, solemnly and practically, that we are called to holiness, not individually alone, but congregationally; that any other ecclesiastical principle surrenders in truth all genuine claim to consistency with His will about His assembly on earth; that waiting for divine manifestations is a vain excuse for tampering with the evil we allow from day to day; and that in fact we have the personal presence of the Spirit, irrevocable while the church is here below, to know and act on His word. So that the unbelief of that plea is as plain as its unholiness. The abuse of 1 Corinthians, and of the seven Apocalyptic Epistles to justify continuance in flagrant evil is a perversion which all corrupt systems have shared. No upright Christian ought to be ensnared by it; he might be unable to unravel the sophistry of the special pleader for going on with iniquity; but surely the Spirit who dwells in him testifies that to employ God's word for associating His children with evil that He hates is, and must be, from beneath.

Herein it is evident that the Irvingite statements are as inconsistent with themselves as they are with scripture, and thus betray their hollow character, to say the least, human, and wholly unreliable, their egregious pretensions notwithstanding. They do not absolutely deny that the Holy Spirit dwelt in some measure or way in the saints since primitive apostolic days; but they arrogate to themselves as their peculiar blessing, and exclusively to be enjoyed under the authority of their apostolate, “the restored Comforter.” Now it is striking to read how scripture puts scorn on this self-exalting claim of theirs. For it is precisely in speaking of the Comforter that the apostle John gives our Lord's assurance that the Father would give that other Paraclete “that He may be with you forever” (John 14:16). Their notion of His restoration impeaches Christ's authority and the truth of scripture. If the Lord, if the scripture, is true, as every Christian believes, the so-called Catholic Apostolics are false. But they agree in fact as little with themselves as with God's word. For they do allow that the gifts or manifestations of the Spirit, the ministrations of the Lord, and the workings or energizings of the Father are as identified as their Persons; that if one fails, so proportionately do the others; and that it is the Father's energizing which raised up Christ that quickens the soul. But if this be true, was there no soul thus born of God between the apostolic age, and the apostles of Newman Street? If souls were so born, what is the value of their teachings and pretensions?

The truth is, that, with all their boldness of assumption and haughty titles, these men have not the courage of their convictions. For if a word of prophecy forbade any other name than that of the Catholic Apostolic Church, as Dr. Norton states (The Restoration, &c., p. 159), it is idle to say, “we arrogate to ourselves nothing, for we do not appropriate it in any exclusive sense.” Common honesty concludes that they thereby arrogate to themselves everything of value. If there were an atom of truth in their doctrine of a restored Comforter, and of a restored apostolate, they most logically appropriate the one body of Christ to their party. The ever-abiding Comforter is as essential on earth, as Christ the exalted Head in heaven, to the perpetuity of the church here below till Christ comes; and the special boast of Irvingism, that they, and they only, have the Comforter restored, is mere folly and falsehood, which are so glaring that one wonders not at their toning down their language in public, whatever they may utter among the initiated. Let their “sealed” ones answer whether they do not in private, and in the most exclusive sense, appropriate more than title or name common to all.

Chapter 34

The Catholic Apostolic Body or Irvingites: 2. Early History

In tracing the first manifestations of that which issued in the establishment of this society, two publications furnish considerable help. One is Dr. R. Norton's “Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; in the Catholic Apostolic Church (London: Bosworth and Harrison, 215, Regent Street, 1861),” the other, and far earlier pamphlet, “Narrative of Facts, characterizing the Spiritual Manifestations in members of Mr. Irving's congregation, and other individuals in England and Scotland, and formerly in the writer himself. By Robert Baxter. Second Edition, &c. London: James Nisbet, Berners Street, 1833.” The “Morning Watch” (7 vols. 8vo.), which changed its publisher from J. Nisbet with whom it appeared in March 1829, to James Fraser for vol. iv., closing somewhat abruptly in 1833, will afford illustrative matter; for it was therein that the chief men made their first public stand and defense, as it was there that their heterodoxy was keenly defended, though broached, taught, and circulated very fully and in every form elsewhere Among the various authorities I have writings of their accepted apostles, prophets, angels, &c. Nor must one omit to name the Rev. E. Miller's History and Doctrines of Irvingism, &c. (2 Vols. cr. 8vo., London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1, Paternoster Square, 1878), which presents a very full and painstaking account of the system, with such a judgment of it as might be expected from a clergyman of decided Anglican views.

Mr. M. devotes four preliminary chapters to (1) predisposing (2) Edward Irving, (3) early meetings at Mr. Drummond's (Albury), and (4) the early prophesyings and tongues in Scotland. Though interesting we may pass these over and come to the utterances in London, which followed two things gravely to be weighed: continual prayers for the outpouring of the Spirit; and Mr. Irving's heterodoxy on the humanity of Christ, as fallen like every other's, save that He never sinned. Dr. N. devotes his first two chapters (pp. 1-71) to what he calls the “outpouring of the Spirit of God in Scotland,” and “in England"; as in the second (p. 40) he does not disguise the connection of the movement with Mr. Irving's doctrine that the Savior assumed fallen human nature in the virgin's womb.

Mrs. Cardale, wife of a London solicitor (of whom more anon), was, it seems, the first in London to speak in a tongue and prophesy; as did afterward his sister (E.C.), and a Miss Hall who afterward recanted and left them with an humbling confession. The late Mr. B. Noel refused his sanction and exposed the delusion, which drove the family away, till, finding little more countenance from another clergyman, they betook themselves to Mr. I. Mr. Taplin, a clergyman's son, who attended Mr. I.'s early and late prayer-meetings for the outpouring of the Spirit, was the first, after some six months' perseverance, to burst on them one morning as with a cras-cran-cra-crash of thunder when beginning to read Isa. 43, following the tongue with the English words, “Jehovah, hear us.” Mr. I. at once gave thanks to God for thus answering their cry! The next morning, when Ezek. 28 was read, Dr. N. tells us that the same superhuman voice was heard: “It is thou, O Britain; thou art the anointed cherub.” The third morning the same voice burst forth (while one of the young men was praying to God to come down and help them) in these words, “The Lord hath come down. He is in the midst of you. His eye hath seen, His heart hath pitied the affliction of His people, and He

will deliver them. He will not leave any behind.”

Females spoke as yet only in private houses. But on Oct. 16, 183], Miss Hall left her seat during morning service, went into the vestry, and was heard speaking there. An interview ensued when the service was over, when she so spoke that Mr. I. groaned under her, exhortation, and on that evening confessed publicly to the congregation his guilty holding out, and thus prepared them for whatever might be spoken in power, that God's gifts might be thankfully received and His voice be not driven away! The moment he ceased speaking, says Dr. N., “a voice that seemed to rend the roof burst from Mr. T—, first in a tongue, and then in the following words: ‘Why will ye flee from the voice of God? The Lord is in the midst of you. Why will ye flee from His voice? Ye cannot flee from it in the day of judgment.' When order was restored, Mr. Irving told the people that they had been alarmed by what had often pierced his own heart; it was the voice of the living God. He solemnly exhorted all, and concluded with thanksgiving that the Lord had at length prevailed” (pp. 48, 49).

The following Sunday infidels among others attended. Mr. I.'s subject was antichrist, and the utterance drew out a tumult of hissings and hootings. Under the horror of such a scene Mr. I. intimated his wish for “the gifted” to remain away from the evening service, but regretted it when said, and only carried this out one Lord's day, giving license more than ever afterward. The trustees therefore intervened and ejected him in the spring that followed; as indeed such proceedings were intolerable in the eyes of sober Presbyterians, to whose discipline and policy he was yet responsible. Mr. I. however, independent as he was in his bearing toward other Christians, seemed spell-bound before the gifted men and women. There were moments when he deeply felt their iron heel, only to fall under their commands more and more deeply. It is a painful and humiliating story. But for their unhallowed influence Mr. I. would probably have seen it his duty to have given up, not the Regent Square Chapel only, but Presbyterianism. But the spirit at work perverted and paralyzed an otherwise honest mind and noble heart. By the Presbytery of Annan, which had ordained him in 1802, he was tried and deprived in 1832 for his false doctrine, and died a worn-out old man at forty-two in Glasgow, Dec. 8th, 1834.

For years before Mr. Vs death, and in high estimation, not only for correct piety, but among the “gifted,” stood Mr. Baxter, to whose “Narrative” we may now profitably turn. One can understand how godly souls were moved by the sight, on the one hand, of infidelity coming in like a flood, on the other, of Christendom's self-complacency, whether in its irregular activities, or in its Pagan-Jewish forms and ceremonies. Then all alike started with the unbelieving thought that the Holy Spirit needed to be poured out afresh; which directly exposed to a snare of the enemy. An answer from God could only come to the prayer of faith. Had they before Him sought to cease from all that grieved the Spirit, and hindered their subjection to the Lord in devoted obedience of His word, how blessed had it been for them, how full of honor to Christ!

Mr. B. (a few months after writing the “Layman's Appeal” on behalf of the English Establishment, then beginning to totter under the strokes which will never cease till the end of its enemies is accomplished) was one of those who longed greatly and prayed much for such an outpouring, as he tells us himself “When I saw, as it seemed to me, proof that those who claimed the gifts were walking honestly, and that the power manifested in them was evidently supernatural, and moreover bore testimony to Christ come in the flesh, I welcomed it as the work of God, though it was long before I publicly spoke of it.

“At this period I was by professional arrangements called up to London, and had a strong desire to attend at the prayer-meetings which were then privately held by those who spoke in the power and those who sought for the gift. Having obtained an introduction I attended; my mind fully convinced that the power was of God, and prepared, as such, to listen to the utterances. After one or two brethren had read and prayed, Mr. T——— was made to speak two or three words very distinctly, and with an energy and depth of tone which seemed to me extraordinary; and it fell upon me as a supernatural utterance, which I ascribed to the power of God: the words were in a tongue I did not understand. In a few minutes Miss E. C. broke out in an utterance in English, which, as to matter and manner and the influence it had upon me, I at once bowed to as the utterance of the Spirit of God. Those who have heard the powerful and commanding utterance need no description; but they who have not may conceive what an unnatural and unaccustomed tone of voice, an intense and riveting power of expression—with the declaration of a cutting rebuke to all who were present, and applicable to my own state of mind in particular—would effect upon me, and upon the others who were come together, expecting to her the voice of the Spirit of God. In the midst of the feeling of awe and reverence which this produced, I was seized upon by the power; and in much struggling against it was made to cry out, and myself to give forth a confession of my own sin in the matter, for which we were rebuked; and afterward to utter a prophecy that the messengers of the Lord should go forth, publishing, to the ends of the earth in the mighty power of God, the testimony of the near coming of the Lord Jesus. The rebuke had been for not declaring the near coming of Jesus; and I was smitten in conscience, having many times refrained from speaking of it to the people, under the fear that they might stumble over it and be offended.

“I was overwhelmed by this occurrence. The attainment of the gift of prophecy, which this supernatural utterance was deemed to be, was with myself and many others a great object of desire. I could not therefore but rejoice at having been made the subject of it; but there were so many difficulties attaching to the circumstances under which the power came upon me, and I was so anxious and distressed lest I should mistake the mind of God in the matter, that I continued many weeks weighed down in spirit and overwhelmed. There was in me at the time of the utterance very great excitement; and yet I was distinctly conscious of a power acting upon me beyond the mere power of excitement. So distinct was this power from the excitement that, in all my trouble and doubt about it, I never could attribute the whole to excitement. Conceiving, as I had previously done, that the power speaking in the speakers was of God, I was convinced the power in me was the same power; and I regarded the confession which was wrung from me to be the same thing as is spoken of in 1 Cor. 14, where it is said, ‘If all prophesy,' &c. It seemed to be so with me: I was unlearned; the secret of my heart was manifest; and I was made, by a power unlike anything I had ever known before, to fall down and acknowledge that God was among them of a truth” (pp. 3-6).

After detailing some further experience tending to confirm his impressions, Mr. B. proceeds (p. 8), “I am thus particular in explaining these circumstances that I may accurately show how unequal we are, in our own strength to stand before God; and how rapidly we may fall from all our convictions and views of truth, if our God should see fit, in judgment for our sins, to leave us for a season to the influence of a seducing spirit. From this period for the space of five months I had no utterance in public; though, when engaged alone in private prayer, the power would come down upon me, and cause me to pray with strong crying and tears for the state of the church.

“On one occasion, about a month after I had received the power, whilst in my study endeavoring to lift up my soul to God in prayer, my mind was so filled with worldly concerns that my thoughts were wandering to them continually. Again and again I began to pray, and before a minute had passed, I found that my thoughts had wandered from my prayer-book again into the world. I was much distressed at this temptation, and sat down, lifting up a short ejaculation to God for deliverance; when suddenly the power came down upon me, and I found myself lifted up in soul to God, my wandering thoughts at once riveted, and calmness of mind given me. By a constraint I cannot describe, I was made to speak—at the same time shrinking from utterance and yet rejoicing in it. The utterance was a prayer that the Lord would have mercy upon me and deliver me from fleshly weakness, and would graciously bestow upon me the gifts of His Spirit, the gift of wisdom, the gift of knowledge, the gift of faith, the working of miracles, the gift of healing, the gift of prophecy, the gift of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues; and that He would open my mouth and give me strength to declare His glory.

“This prayer, short almost as I have now penned it, was forced from me by the constraint of the power which acted upon me; and the utterance was so loud that I put my handkerchief to my mouth to stop the sound that I might not alarm the house. When I had reached the last word I have written, the power died off me, and I was left just as before, save in amazement at what had passed, and filled, as it seemed to me, with thankfulness to God for His great love so manifested to me. With the power there came upon me a strong conviction, This is the Spirit of God: what you are now praying is of the Spirit of God, and must therefore be of the mind of God and; what you are now asking will surely be given to you.

This conviction, strong as it was at the moment, was never shaken until the whole work fell to pieces. But from that day I acted in the full assurance that in God's own good time all these gifts would be bestowed upon me.”

An important fact appears in Mr. B.'s “Narrative,” p. 12. The early prayer-meeting had been instituted to pray for the General Assembly to be guided aright in judging Mr. L's doctrine, especially on the Human Nature of our Lord. In Jan. 1832 Mr. B. took part there “in the power.” During this visit to London, at a private house, after Mrs. J. Cardale testified, Mr. B. gave out for two hours or upwards, with very little interval, “what we all regarded as prophecies concerning the church and the nation.” “The power which then rested on me was far more mighty than before, laying down my mind and body in perfect obedience, and carrying me on without confusion or excitement. Excitement there might appear to a bystander, but to myself it was calmness and peace. Every former visitation of the power had been very brief; but now it continued and seemed to rest upon me all the evening. The things I was made to utter flashed in upon my mind without forethought, without expectation, and without any plan or arrangement: all was the work of a moment, and I was as the passive instrument of the power which used me. In the beginning of my utterances that evening some observations were addressed by me to the pastor [Mr. Irving] in a commanding tone; and the manner and course of utterance manifested in me was so far differing from those which had been manifested in the members of his own flock, that he was much startled,” &c. (pp. 13, 14).

On the following morning, as we are a little after told, Mr. B. was made by the power to read and expound Rev. 11, declaring that the two witnesses were two offices (prophet and minister), the

one already known in “the gifted,” the other now for the first time manifested (in himself), and that this should be multiplied, as the days of their witnessing were now begun. In the evening the declaration of the two witnesses was repeated; “and very distinctly we were commanded to count the days, one thousand three score and two hundred” 1260—the days appointed for testimony, at the end of which the saints of the Lord should go up to meet the Lord in the air, and evermore be with the Lord” (p. 17). It seems that Mr. B. used to think of some earthly sanctuary in and through the days of vengeance, but had experienced a sudden change of opinion more in accord with Mr. I., founded on Matt. 24 and Luke 21, his wife also having undergone a like change, each unknown to the other (pp. 17, 18).

These scriptures were no right basis for a truth clearly provable by others; for they speak of the Lord's future dealings with Israel on earth, not with the saints for heaven. This was not divine guidance. But Mr. B. draws special attention (for “the words of the prophecy were most distinct) to count from that day (viz. 14th Jan. 1832) 1260 days, and (? or) three days and a half (Rev. 11:11); and on innumerable other occasions by exposition and prophecy was the same thing again and again declared, and most largely opened” (pp. 18, 19). It was one of the many falsehoods to which the spirit there at work stood committed, which ought to have satisfied all, as it later convinced Mr. B. himself, that the work was not of God's Spirit. Other failures startled the prophet, but two ladies prophesied (pp. 20, 21) so as to show that the work in him was of God, and that he was not to be troubled by anything! “I found on a sudden, in the midst of my accustomed course a power coming upon me which was altogether new—an unnatural and in many cases a most appalling utterance given to me—matters uttered by me in this power of which I had never thought, and many of which I did not understand until long after they were uttered—an enlarged comprehension and clearness of view given to me on points which were really the truth of God (though mingled with many things which I have since seen not to be the truth, but which then had the form of truth), &c It was manifest to me the power was supernatural; it was therefore a spirit. It seemed to me to bear testimony to Christ, and to work the fruits of the Spirit of God. The conclusion was inevitable that it was the Spirit of God; and, if so, the deduction was immediate that it ought in all things to be obeyed” (p. 22). Fresh and marked failures occurred; but Jer. 20:7 was perverted to cover lies; or they were spiritualized to quiet conscience and to lull all into deeper deceit (pp. 23-28). “In the course of the same day and the day following, a prophecy was given to me that God had cut short the present appointment for ordinary ministers—It was added that this was the consequence of the setting up of the abomination of desolation. The Spirit of God having withdrawn from the church, the church was thenceforth desolate; and now God would endow men with the power of utterance in the Spirit, as the gift of distinguishing those set apart for the ministry” “‘The plan was adopted of assigning the present day as the time of fulfillment on the Gentile church of those scriptures which speak of the setting up of the abomination of desolation” (Matt. 24, Luke 21) p. 29. Again, the reader will observe the Judaizing at work by misapplied scripture, the abomination being said to be the quenching of the Spirit, and the desolation, God's withdrawal of the Spirit. Thus 2 Thess. 2 was read mystically (which the popular commentators endorse), for the man of sin was the spirit of the world in the church opposing the Spirit God would shortly pour down; as by and by he would be a more fearful manifestation in mimicry of Jesus as King of kings in the person of young Napoleon (pp. 30, 31).

Mr. B. gives the development of this working of Satan as an angel of light in pp. 32-55, some domestic, some as to his brother, a clergyman, drawn into the delusion (whose service Mr. B. undertook one Lord's day publicly in the power). Then came in the power an interpretation of Rev. 12 (pp. 56, 57), which made “the woman” mean the spiritual church, i.e., those partakers of the Spirit, and contradistinguished from the visible church seen in “the beast rising out of the earth! “The man child was the testimony by preaching Christ's Second Coming; and the fleeing into the wilderness meant the spiritual now to be cast out and separate since Jan. 14, 1832 for the 1260 days, as the war in heaven was now against the Spirit in the midst of the Lord's people! These of course would have the victory, but woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea, i.e., the nations, and the churches, respectively, thenceforward given up to Satan's delusions and anger.

This, full of self-complacency, in every part false, was followed closely by the power on Mr. B. opening Rev. 8, as if “the third part” meant Protestant Christendom, the papal and the infidel being the other two parts, the last brought about by the late French Revolution. The hail meant the tories! once fertilizing water, now frozen so as to beat down and hurt the grass, i.e., good order! and trees or settled institutions, which it once sustained; the fire was the liberal party! now as ardent and hot as the tories were congealed, but destructive and burning to make all things new.

On the following Sunday, as we are informed, the power moved him to declare the second trumpet to be God's judgment on the sea, or military state! as the earth was the civil. The mountain burning with fire was made the aggregation of liberalism in different forms of a side in collision with the military, so as to reduce even the army to a lifeless state, the ships being the commanders! the creatures the rank and file! and the third part still Protestant, and Great Britain as principal and head. The third trumpet was applied ecclesiastically, and the fourth governmentally, so that king and queen would reign, and the House of Lords be extinguished! Yet the Reform Bill would not pass; but when the people flew against the army, the iron Duke would be again Prime Minister, and fulfill the third and fourth trumpets. Think of this trumpery attributed to scripture, as well as to the power of the Spirit! The fifth trumpet would be the spoliation of the church, the sixth its complete overthrow and civil war, England being still the scene! and all these trumpets to be fulfilled, the first four within two years, and the others in the remaining year and a half (pp. 58-62). It is interesting to have the rare opportunity of a man confessing his false prophecies, and the sad spectacle of a religious body cleaving to them with a death-grip notwithstanding.

But even worse was at hand, following a blinding use of Eph. 6:12 (p. 62). “The display of this truth was used to rivet me, and those with me, in the power of the enemy.” It was Satan warning against Satan to keep them fast in his snare.

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“About this time was consummated the masterpiece of doctrinal delusion in the development of the baptism of fire, as it was thenceforth expounded by me,” &c. (pp. 63, 64). I should rather say that a deeper foundation of evil was laid in the blasphemous assumption of fallen humanity in Christ's person. But however this be, “it was declared in utterance that the Lord would again send apostles, by the laying on of whose hands should follow the baptism of fire; and should give to the disciples of Christ the full freedom of the Holy Ghost, and full and final victory over the world” (p. 65). Fresh utterances followed, calling for enlarged confidence in the Lord's unbounded love, as before they had warned against Satan's snares as an angel of light, alike from the enemy to blind and turn them into his meshes.

“At the interval of a day or two there followed an appalling utterance—that the Lord had set me apart for Himself—that from that day I was called to the spiritual ministry I must count forty days—that this was now well nigh expired—that for those forty days was it appointed I should be tried—that the Lord had tried me and found me faithful, and having now proved in me the first sign of an apostle, patience (referring to 2 Cor. 12:12), he would give to me the fullness of them in the gifts of signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds—that the Lord had called me to be an apostle; and, by the laying on of my hands and the hands of the other apostles whom the Lord should call, should the baptism of fire be bestowed. Then was added a repetition of the fearful oath given on the declaration of my call to the ministry, ‘By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; by Myself have I sworn; by Myself have I sworn that I will not fail you, I will never leave nor forsake you.' I was commanded to go back to the church where my mouth was opened, and on the fortieth day power should be given, the sick should be healed, the deaf should hear, the dead should be restored, and all the mighty signs and wonders should appear; apostles and ministers should be ordained, endowed, and sent forth to the ends of the earth, to warn the world of the rapture of the saints, and make ready a people prepared for the Lord. It was declared that, when I again stood in the church in London, I should be made to rebuke them sharply; that they had sorely pained the Lord and hindered His work; full development took place on the Friday preceding the fortieth day, which would fall on a Wednesday. On the Sat. or Sunday came an utterance concerning Scotland—that that was a land of prophets; that the church there had greatly erred in rejecting the remembrance of the apostolic government, but God had used them as prophets to His church; that, because of this, the servant of that church in London (alluding to Mr. Irving) would not be given the apostolic office, but would be sent as a prophet to Scotland, to bear the Lord's warning before the carnage which would ensue from the cholera there. This utterance was accompanied with great power in the form of revelation, laying open to me that Mr. A. [Nicholas Armstrong, an Irish clergyman] would be ordained an apostle [which was done afterward], and that the clergyman, to whom I have before alluded as a believer in the work, would be set apart for the apostolic office in London [which was certainly never done]; that I should be carried to foreign lands, after passing through a few parts of this land, and should only return at the end of the three years and a half, to join my family immediately previous to the tribulation” (pp. 66, 67).

It is needless to enlarge. It was all a tissue of pretentious falsehood with just enough appearance of truth to ensnare its votaries. The solemn fact is to be noted that the mouth-piece was a saint, more upright than most of his companions, yet a prey to delusion for a season, but soon mercifully delivered.

“On the morrow [i.e., the fortieth day of promise], at the morning prayer-meeting, nothing peculiar occurred. At breakfast several strangers to me were present, and having been made to give forth what seemed a most glorious prophecy concerning the endowments which would attend upon the spiritual (!) apostles whom the Lord would send forth; in how much they would exceed (!!) the endowments given to the twelve apostles (!!!), it was, &c. The day however passed without any manifestation of the signs and wonders which had been foretold. I was made in power to speak to Mr. A., declaring the Lord had called him to the office of apostle; that he would receive the endowment of an apostle, and speedily go to Ireland, to build the Lord a spiritual church there. On the disappointment of our hopes for the, day we all seemed to pause, expecting that the succeeding day might realize what the present did not furnish” (pp. 69, 70).

Even so Satan kept up the delusion, not only by Mr. Baxter's public utterance on Thursday which wrought powerfully on Mr. Irving, but by a strange incident on the Saturday at breakfast in Mr. I.'s house. A stranger asked the Lord's will about something, when the power came on Mr. Baxter and referred in the answer to Mr. B.'s proceedings [for Mr. H. Bulteel of Oxford was for a while carried away by the delusion] with a warning against his rash course. There was nothing in the question, gentleman, or previous conversation, leading to Mr. B.; yet it turned out that it was the very thing that led to the difficulties as to which counsel was asked. No wonder, in detailing yet more (pp. 74, 75), that Mr. B. says, “Ah! how true is the word of God. ‘If the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness.' On the Sunday, when Mr. I. was noticing the unseemly behavior of a young man who insisted on going out, the power came on Mr. B. with a most appalling cry, or rather, shout to the effect of a curse on the land, when Mr. I. pronounced this an example of Rev. 11:5 (fire proceedeth out of their mouth), and that Mr. B. was called of God a spiritual minister, one of the witnesses, while he himself was but a fleshly minister, and unable to command discipline as Mr. B. did; and so it would be, when the full power of this ministry was come in, that discipline would be enforced” (p. 77).

But the snare of an evil spirit once yielded to is not so easily detected or broken, specially, we may suppose, in one accepted. as a prophet, and more than a prophet, as an apostle elect. How God wrought to deliver we shall soon learn.

Several circumstances about this time happened and were used somewhat later of God to deliver Mr. Baxter from the evil spirit which was at work in him, accepted by Mr. Irving and his friends as the Spirit of God. The visit to London of a North American Indian chief may be mentioned as a plain fact, and not without instructive interest for its proof of the infatuation that reigned among them.

“One evening at Mr. P.'s [? Percival's] I met Mr. R. [? Ryerson] who had come from North America, and had been a missionary among the Indians there. I had in the country received an utterance and a revelation concerning America, which I was mentioning, when he declared his opinion that the American Indians were the lost ten tribes of Israel. He asked me if I had any teaching upon it. I told him I had not, and after hearing from him that one of their native chiefs was converted and

now in London, I thought no more of it. A few mornings afterward, at breakfast at Mr. Irving's, a conversation arose upon America, and I mentioned what had been revealed to me concerning it; and Mr. Irving asked, with reference to some utterance, whether I should conclude it referred to the ten tribes. I paused, for the power rested upon me, and after a little time it was distinctly revealed in the power, and I was made to utter that the American Indians were the lost ten tribes, and that they should, within the three years and a half appointed for the spiritual ministry, be gathered back into their own land, and be settled there before the days of vengeance set in. That the chief, who was now in London, was a chosen vessel of the Lord to lead them back—that he should be endowed with power from on high in all signs and mighty wonders, and should lead them back though in unbelief—that he should receive his power here, and be speedily sent forth to them. After this I went with Mr. Irving, Miss E. C. (who had been present at the foregoing prophecy), and several others, to a Jewish institution, where I was again made to reiterate to the Jews there present the promise of speedy restoration, and vengeance upon all their enemies.

“Being on another occasion assembled with some young men of Mr. Irving's congregation, the Indian chief, who had been alluded to, came in; and I was made in a most triumphant chant to address him as the vessel chosen of God, and to be endowed of God for the bringing back of his brethren. Afterward I supped with him at Mr. R.'s. The chief did not believe in the message, or in the gifts, though he was apparently astounded; and, as I conversed with him, his countenance and tout ensemble was so utterly foreign to my idea of a Jew, and so strongly of the Tartar cast, that my confidence in my prophecy was shaken, and I was quite miserable under the fear that I had been mistaken and deluded in the matter. However, my conscience was clear of all willful mistake, and I resisted the fear as a temptation, though exceedingly tried by it. I hinted it to no one, and sought counsel of no one; but I was relieved from my doubt in a most extraordinary way—a way which might be called accidental, did not the very frequent occurrence of such things in the midst of the working of the power, under which I and others were walking, show that it was much more. On the following or next succeeding morning, as I was walking from church with Miss E. C., she, without any reference on my part to the subject, alluded to the prophecy, and said to me, `It is very remarkable that when you spoke about the ten tribes the other morning, whilst you were pausing the power was so strong and so distinct upon me, I was ready to give the very utterance you gave, and the whole was before my mind as distinct as if I had spoken it.'

“This quite dispelled my doubts. I thought I could not have mistaken the mind of the Spirit, since the same communication was made to her at the same time. Thus were my doubts in this instance removed; and were I to multiply instances, even beyond what may occur in the narrative, I should only more largely confirm the fact of the subtle lying in wait of the enemy, ready by signs and workings (so far as power was committed unto him) to remove doubts, and cancel difficulties, and bring us anew into a state of unsuspecting confidence in the spirit which swayed us. I will also point to this simultaneous action of the power upon Miss E. C. and myself, as an instance of what continually occurred, and as a proof of the identity of the origin of the manifestations in both. The subject of this prophecy was so far new to me, that I had never had the question of the Indians being the ten tribes brought before me, old as it is in the literary world; and even when Mr. It. mentioned it, it made no perceptible impression upon my mind; nor did I to my knowledge ever think any more of it—until it arose again at Mr. Irving's. What Miss E. C.'s previous impressions were I know not; but certainly the prophecy developed no previous impressions formed in my own

mind, but was to me both a novelty and a difficulty.

“The complete failure of this prophecy is very manifest. The chief went away to his countrymen an unbeliever in the work, and none of the powers have been at all manifested” (Narrative, pp. 80-82).

But there was like failure about that which affected all nearer home. “Not to dwell too long upon minor incidents I was weighed down under the delay of the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the apostolic endowments on the fortieth day. Prayer was made daily for me in Mr. Irving's church, in obedience to the injunction given by Miss E C. on the evening before alluded to; and Mr. Irving did not hesitate to pray publicly before his people that I might receive the fall endowment of an apostle. To add to my distress, I had heard from my friend in the country, who had spoken in power and received directions to go and perform a miracle of healing, stating, that in fasting and prayer he had gone upon the errand, but had failed to perform any miracle; that he concluded he had spoken by a lying spirit, and could no longer believe we were speaking by the Spirit of God. My prophecy concerning the fortieth day had been bruited about in my own neighborhood, and its failure, together with that of my friend, had had such an effect, that my wife, and greater part of the believers in the country, abandoned it as a delusion. My faith in it was, however, not the least shaken. I saw the fiery trial I had to go through in endeavoring to uphold what I considered to be the truth in the face of such seeming failures; and yet I confidently trusted God would make manifest His mercy and power in the midst of it.

“I continued yet a day or two with them; and one morning calling upon Mrs. J. C., she asked me whether I had any teachings upon the propriety or impropriety of prayer-meetings formed of ladies alone; one of which had been some months established, and she and the ether gifted persons had been in the habit of attending. I was made in power to declare they were not profitable—to rebuke her for not having sooner discerned it, and to bid her go, as they met that morning, and declare to them what had now been spoken. She carried the message to the meeting, and they all at once agreed to abandon it, but desired to go to prayer, to return God thanks that they had so long been kept in peace; when the power came on Miss E. C., as she afterward told me, and she was made to rebuke them for not more implicitly obeying the word of the Lord given by me, and so bid them separate without prayer.

“At the same time that Mrs. J. C. consulted me as to the ladies' meetings, Mr. J. C. remarked, concerning the select prayer-meetings at Mr. Irving's church, that he had often found great heaviness upon him at them. I was then made to declare Mr. Irving had erred in making them select—that they ought to be open to all. This was conveyed to Mr. Irving, and he at once acknowledged the error, and opened the meetings generally to all. I may here mention that on a former occasion Mr. Irving had consulted me upon the same subject, and had received a like rebuke. The reason he made them select was, that he found the power more manifested when those who believed in it as of the Spirit of God were alone present; and on the other hand found in a miscellaneous assembly the power was quenched. It was told him in power from my lips that he was offending in this, by giving occasion to the enemy to say the manifestations would not bear the light; and, furthermore, by shutting up the manifestation of God's love he was practically acting as though God did not intend the message of His love and pardon to be made known to all men. He seemed at the first rebuke to yield to the reasoning, but he did not act upon it; and it was not till the second rebuke was conveyed by Mr. J. C. to him, that he publicly declared to the congregation

that he had received such a rebuke and changed his plan. I understand that now he has again under another name restored select meetings, and I am deeply grieved to find it so. For here in the midst of minds duly prepared Satan can gradually develop the subject of his delusion, and going on step by step can unwarily lead his victims into extravagance, first of doctrine, and next of conduct, which they themselves would without such gradual preparation shudder to contemplate. So long as their proceedings are open to the public eye, there will always be some warning and remonstrance set before them upon the development of any new device. When shut up to themselves, the mind is gradually darkened, and the delusion becomes daily stronger, until they are ripe for each successive stage of the mystery of iniquity. As a proof of this, I may allude to the fact that they are now avowedly exercising apostolic functions, without pretending to have the signs of an apostle, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds; and the individual who has been thus set apart for apostolic office prays in their meetings in the following strain Lord, am I not thine apostle? Yet where are the signs of my apostleship? Where are the wonders and mighty deeds? O Lord, send them down on me,' &c. He has as an apostle, and in the name of an apostle, laid hands on several, and ordained them to the ministerial office, as evangelists and elders; yet it is not pretended that the manifestation of the baptism of the Holy Ghost follows with the laying on of his hands.

“When I was amongst them, we were all of one mind, that the apostolic office could not be exercised until the signs of an apostle in signs, wonders and mighty deeds, were manifest in the individual claiming the apostolic office; and were also of one mind that the baptism with the Holy Ghost would attend the laying on of the hands of the apostle. It appears in their private meetings this further depth of 'folly' has been added to the 'folly' to which I wickedly introduced them. And they are so hardened under it, that they do not now hesitate publicly to declare it. Coupled with this also is the further 'folly' of Mr. Irving's claiming, as angel of the church, authority over the apostle; and the apostle is put under subjection to the pastor, or angel, as he designates himself. Surely in these things is a darkness that may be felt. We may however trust that the word of the Lord has reached them, which declares, concerning the deceivers of the last days (2 Tim. 9), They shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men. May God graciously make it manifest to themselves.

“But to resume the narrative: my professional engagements in town being ended, I purposed going out; but before I did so, I mentioned to Miss E. C., as well as to Mr. T., the full circumstances under which I was sent up to them. Mr. T. was made almost immediately to declare in the power, with reference to the powers, and signs, and miracles which were promised, 'Ye shall do it—ye shall do it'! Miss E. C. spoke once or twice in the power, and I gathered that I ought to wait till the morrow at least. One utterance which she gave was, ‘Wait and pray, that the glory of the Lord may burst forth in the midst of the congregation,' with some other words referring to the congregation then assembled, and leading me to the full expectation that on that very evening, in the congregation there met, the power with signs and wonders would be given. As, however, I went out of the vestry, an extraordinary visitation of darkness, which I had experienced on more than one occasion when expectations were not realized, came over me, laying my mind under the severest darkness. Nothing whatever occurred on that evening in the congregation, and I returned to my hotel. On the morrow I was made at the morning meeting to give a long and severe rebuke to the congregation, declaring they hindered the work of the Lord, and calling upon them to humble

themselves because of it. Alas! little did I think what it was which was hindered.

“At breakfast at Mr. Irving's, the closing scene of my unhappy ministrations among them was no less remarkable than mysterious. Very great utterance had for several mornings been given me at family prayers there, and particularly beautiful and comforting expositions of scripture were given from the power. This morning a clergyman (who, I have since understood, was from Ireland, and had come especially to inquire, favorably disposed towards the work, but startled at the doctrines) was present. He was talking to Mr. Irving, but I did not hear his observations. Presently the sister of Miss E. C., who sat by me, said, ‘That gentleman is grieving the Spirit.' I looked, and saw a power resting on Miss E. C., and presently she spoke in rebuke; but I did not gather more from it than that the gentleman had been advancing something erroneous. Mr. Irving then began to read a chapter, to which I had been made in power to direct him; but instead of my expounding as before, the power resting upon me revealed there were those in the room who must depart. Utterance came from me that we were assembled at an holy ordinance to partake of the body and blood of Christ, and it behooved all to examine themselves, that they might not partake unworthily. None going out, I was made again and again, more and more peremptorily, to warn until the clergyman in question, and an aged man, a stranger, had gone out, when Mr. Irving proceeded in reading the chapter, ‘I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath,' &c., and I was made to expound as usual, with great setting forth of God's love in the midst of the trials of His people, and with great promises of blessing. It was greatly to my own comfort, and I believe also to that of others. I often prayed in the power, and when all was concluded I was made in power to declare to Mr. Irving that he had seen in this an example of the ministration of the supper of the Lord, as he had before seen the example of baptism; that he must preach and declare them to his flock, for speedily would the Lord bring them forth; that the opening of the word was the bread, and the indwelling and renewing presence of the Spirit, the wine the body and blood of the Lord; and the discerner of spirits would not permit the unbelievers to mingle with the faithful, but they would be driven out as he had seen. Then in power I was made to warn all of the snares of the enemy, and concluded with the remarkable words, Be not ye like unto Peter, 'I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.' It is not a little remarkable, that upon the call being made for all to depart who did not examine themselves and receive the word spoken in power as the word of God, the clergyman I before alluded to professed his faith in the work, and I was made to tell him he was doubting and was not confirmed in it. And I have since heard that he was in so much doubt that, when he came to consider, he abandoned the work as delusion. Whilst under the awe of the presence of the supernatural power, he was so confounded or overcome as to profess full faith in it, and believe himself to be really receiving it. I had not any previous idea that on this morning the ministration of the Lord's Supper would be given, nor had I until this was set before me any conception what its spiritual ministration would be.

“In the previous part of the morning Miss E. C. had been made to speak in power to me, to the effect that I was shrinking from the cross, in being pained at going back into the country with the endowment promised. This had weighed with me, and my mind was made up to return. After the noon-day service, before all the congregation were departed, she asked me if I intended to go home. On my telling her did, she was made in power to address me, which though in a subdued tone, was perceived by the congregation remaining, who immediately stopped. Her message was, that I was right in returning home; that the Lord was well pleased with me that I had been content

to walk in darkness; that I had been faithful to the Lord, and the Lord would be faithful to me; that I should return and pass into deep waters, but yet for a little time, and I should behold the glory and rejoice. Mr. Irving then informed the remaining congregation, that it appeared to be the will of the Lord that I should depart for a little season, and prayed that I might speedily return with full powers of an apostle to impart unto them the gift for which they were longing" (pp. 86-89).

These minute particulars are here given, as more will follow of a witness not only reliable, but with the best possible means of information, before the seal of secrecy was imposed, as it soon was sought to be, on all, of prime importance to be known in order to a sound judgment. Grace secures that God's children have ample warning of the enemy's work.

The Catholic Apostolic Body or Irvingites: 4. Early History

CHAPTER I. EARLY HISTORY.

“I accordingly returned into the country deeply depressed, though quite unshaken in my faith of the work. The difficulties which had been thrown in my way were great; but I trusted the Lord would overrule them all, and I resumed my public teaching as before. My wife having relapsed into unbelief of the manifestations, my mouth was not at all opened in private, until by another remarkable dealing her confidence in it was restored. On the fourth day after my return, I had arranged to begin a public morning prayer-meeting; and as it gave her such pain, I did not mention the subject to her. She however seemed to have an impression that something particular was about to be done, and questioned me so closely that I was obliged to tell her. She was both irritated and distressed, and, in the fullest conviction that the work was a delusion, did all she could to dissuade me from having the prayer-meeting.

I had however only left her a few minutes, to proceed to the prayer-meeting, before a power came upon her in the form of revelation, calming all her irritation and distress, and in a moment filling her mind with peace, giving to her a reason why the powers and signs and wonders were not bestowed upon the fortieth day, and assuring her of great blessings from the Lord and a speedy fulfillment of what had been prophesied. It was also told her as a sign to prove This revelation to be of God, that as soon as I came home, when she came to me, I should say, ‘Speak, speak;' and then after she had told me the revelation, I should speak to her in the power, and beginning, ‘It is of the Lord,' should fully explain what had been revealed to her. When I came home, I thought she seemed much troubled, and, unconscious of what had occurred, I said to her, `Speak, speak.' Upon this she told me the revelation, not saying anything of my speaking afterward; and when she had told me, the power immediately came upon me to utterance, and I was made to say in great power, ‘It is of the Lord,' and then to open and explain it. This so fully concurring with what had been revealed cleared away the doubt which the non-fulfillment of the former promise had created; and she again fully yielded to the persuasion that the work was of God.

“In the revelation allusion had been made to the case of Miriam (Num. 12:10); and in the utterance which followed it was declared, that the power was not given on the fortieth day, because the church in London had failed in love toward the visible church which God had cast off. It had some time before been declared that the separation between myself and my wife, which the Lord had ordained, was as a type and figure of the Lord's casting off the visible church and the visible ordinances. Now it was further declared that God was zealous for those whom He had so cast off; and as the camp of the Israelites could not proceed in its journeyings until Miriam was brought in again, so now was the work of the Lord stayed, and the power in signs and wonders delayed until the heart of the church was turned toward those whom the Lord had made desolate. And then followed in the power a most emphatic declaration that on the day after the morrow we should both be baptized with fire: so should we be joined together in the bond of the Lord's baptism, the Lord also joining Himself to His desolate church again, by bringing forth visibly a spiritual church with

spiritual ordinances in fullness of power and gifts; that had the church in London manifested greater love, this baptism and power would have been given there; but now it should be given here, and on the day named we should receive it, and thenceforward would the work proceed in swiftness and not again tarry. Most glorious prophecies, as they seemed to be, followed these declarations, and great fullness of development as to the constitution of the spiritual church: and its progress through the earth to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

“We were overjoyed with these communications, and, in fullness of hope and confidence, awaited the day of fulfillment. The interval was filled up by very powerful and frequent utterances in interpretation of scripture, and in confirmation of the work. The day named arrived, and in the evening an utterance from the power, Kneel down, and receive the baptism of fire.' We knelt down, lifting up prayer continually. Nothing however ensued. Again and again we knelt, and again and again we prayed, but day by day for a long time we continued in prayer and supplication, continually expecting the baptism. My wife gradually concluded the whole must be delusion, and ceased to follow it. For six weeks, however, I continued unshaken to seek after it, but found it not.

“The baptism of fire was fully explained in utterance to be the burning out of the carnal mind, and subduing every sinful lust of the flesh; so that those who received it should be freed from the law of sin, and thenceforth freed from Satan's temptations through the flesh; that the fullness of the presence of the Holy Ghost should accompany it, and thenceforth those receiving it should walk in the fullness of spiritual light and life, and repel every assault of the enemy—should walk in perfect holiness and be utterly free from sin; that the gifts of the Spirit would follow according to the office to which each individual was ordained of God, to the apostle in all fullness of gifts, and power, and signs, and mighty wonders, and to all other office-bearers in due measure; that it was a baptism specially reserved for the three years and a half of the last ministry upon earth, and during this period the ministers of the Lord would be borne about from place to place by the Spirit as Philip was. Bodily changes, it was also declared, would be wrought by the baptism; and it was especially declared, that, as a consequence of such changes, the marriage state would no longer be blessed with increase; and husbands and wives, sons and daughters, would thenceforward be called to the ministry, and devote themselves to the office of warning the world, until the expiration of the days of testimony should summon them to the glory of the Lord.

“From the time of my return from town the difficulties seemed on all sides to increase. A few days after I left him, Mr. Irving, forwarding a letter, added a few lines of his own, telling me how greatly they were encouraged and strengthened in London by my last visit, and stating how they looked forward to my return with the full powers of an apostle; but at the same time adding that Mr. F., who had spoken in power amongst us, had been found to speak by an evil spirit, Mrs. C. and Miss E. C. having been made so to declare. This troubled me greatly, for I have (? had) been made to declare to him his call to the spiritual ministry. He had also been present and spoke in power on the last morning of my presence at Mr. Irving's, when two persons were sent out; and where it was declared in the power that the Lord would not suffer an unbeliever or unclean person to be present at that holy ordinance, as it was called. Here were contradictions I could not explain away; and all I could do was to wait the Lord's teaching on it.

“Next, after an interval came a letter from Mr. Irving, which yet more perplexed me. He said, This moment the Lord hath sent me a very wonderful and wonderfully gracious message by our dear

sister, Miss E. C., concerning the time which you have been made so often to put forth: rebuking me for having repeated it, and counseling me not to do it any more; declaring the word to be a true word, containing a mystery—declaring that the day is not known, and commanding me to write to you to say you must not repeat them in the flesh, but suffer the Spirit to say it how and when it pleaseth.' Mr. Irving then added, 'Here I leave it without any comment whatever. I am not equal to the work of commenting upon these words of the Lord; I am content to walk in the darkness. The same message which said that the word you spake was true, said also that the day is not known, and that it is a mystery, and that you as well as myself had erred in repeating in the flesh this matter of the time. The Lord lead us aright.' I was amazed at this message, for constantly I had been made in power to declare the time, and to explain it, and to enforce it; and more than once I had been made to enjoin ministers publicly to preach it in the flesh, though they had no gift. I had then nearly fallen into the persuasion that my gift could not be a true gift, or that I had so mistaken the loadings of it as to be no more worthy to exercise it. But the recognitions and encouragements given me by Mrs. C. and Miss E. C. in London held me up against the conclusion. I went on speaking and preaching in power, and found the matter of the three years and a half as constantly in my mouth as ever. I could not refrain from speaking it; and yet, when any one asked me about it, I dared not to say anything in explanation, except in power, my mouth being shut by this extraordinary message from Miss E. C.

"A fact which came to my knowledge, after I abandoned the work, has served to give me some insight into the message. A sister of mine when in London, attending the private prayer-meetings before I ever spoke in power, heard several utterances from Miss E. C., in which she most emphatically pronounced that Christ would come at an hour when even His own people would not be looking for Him—that the time of His coming would not be known to His own people. I remember also, that when preaching in the power at Hampstead, I was made to declare the time in Miss E. C.'s presence. She, as we were returning, asked me whether the time had been clearly revealed to me. I saw she did not receive it; but she said no more about it. When I heard of the previous utterances, my inference was that she, having a remembrance of these utterances and feeling the contradiction which my utterances gave to them, was troubled in mind upon it, and that the message that was sent to me was a device of the enemy to lull the disquietude and reconcile the contradiction. The subtlety is indeed deep—recognizing my prophecy as a truth, and yet setting it practically aside, by alleging it to contain a mystery, and therefore not fitted to be named except in the power. I mentioned this inference subsequently to Miss E. C., but she would not speak upon the subject.

"A little later came another blow. Intelligence was sent me, that Miss H., who had for months been received as a prophetess among them—(who had been the first to speak in the Sunday congregation, and whose speaking Miss E. C., on that occasion was made in power to declare ought to be heard; to whom also I in the power had spoken as a prophetess, and on a second occasion Miss E. C. had alluded as speaking of the Lord)—that she had by Miss E C and Mrs. C. been charged with feigning utterances, and they in power had pronounced that the whole work in her was of the flesh, and not of the Lord. I had heard her speak, and her utterance seemed to me at times as full and as clearly supernatural as Miss E. C.'s. She had also begun a prophecy, which Miss E. C. would take up and complete; and she would take up in power what Miss E. C. had begun; so as to cause Mr. Irving to remark how manifestly one Spirit spoke in both.

The particular occasion on which this charge and declaration was made against her did not at all lessen the difficulty. It will be remembered, I was made after the prophecy concerning the national fast to write it down, and send it to a member of the House, enjoining him to deliver it in the House of Commons. This message, after some deliberation, it was intended to deliver by reading the letter containing it. By some accident however the letter was mislaid, and it could not be done. Whilst I was in town, the letter was found; and I was consulted, whether reading the letter would be the proper method of delivering it, and it seemed to me it would not. The letter was shown to Miss E. C., and she in power declared to the effect that the member in delivering it might be made to speak in the power. We could not read positively whether it would without doubt be so; and I was in power made to say he might deliver in the power or without the power. Circumstances, of which I do not know the particulars, prevented its being delivered in the House until the night before the fast-day. For some short time previous to this night Miss H. had urged the member to deliver it, and on the previous night when he had been prevented, she said in the power, ‘Satan has triumphed in its not being delivered.' When, however, the message had been delivered, Miss E. C., knowing Miss H. had spoken on giving it, rebuked her in power for it, and declared that the member had rushed before the Lord, in delivering it without waiting for the power. Upon this unfortunate message the two speakers came into collision, and Miss H. was pronounced a false prophetess. The rebuke however proved true in the matter of feigned utterances; for Miss H. acknowledged that, in two or three instances, she had meditated utterances before repeating them. She was smitten in conscience and bowed before the accusation; and I believe to this day she acknowledges the justice of the sentence against her, though in the particular utterance concerning the message, and in most others, she declares she did not at all premeditate. Explained in any way however, it was a most startling occurrence, as involving all of us in lack of discernment, and two of us in false testimony to her gift.

“Added to all this, the fast-day passed over; and notwithstanding all the prophecies marking it out as a day much to be remembered, and the day of the Lord's answer by fire, nothing had occurred upon it. Moreover, the servant girl, on whom it was declared the miracle of casting out a devil should be performed was recovered of derangement, and had gone out to service, these prophecies also failing. Upon my return to town I saw again the friend whose attempt to perform a miracle had failed, and was made instrumental, soon after we again met, in showing him a gross error of judgment as another subject into which he had nearly fallen. This I believe added to the impression which the power had yet left upon him; and the arguments I used to convince him had such an effect that, though he never returned to a full unsuspecting credence, he again joined the work, and forbore all testimony against it. I was made on several occasions to speak in power to him, and declare that the message to perform the miracle was of the Lord, and only hindered by want of faith in the person on whom it was to be wrought, and that it should yet be fulfilled. These messages he seemed to receive as the word of God, and for some time his confidence seemed restored. But as the time was restored, and failures increased, he was again brought to discard it, though not satisfied that no work of God at all attended it. Since we both fully abandoned it, the person on whom the miracle was to be performed is dead, never having been in the least degree restored.

“Distressing as all these occurrences were, yet I dared not on account of them suffer myself to deny the work. The supernatural nature of it was so clear—the testimony to Jesus was so full—the

outpouring of prayer, and, as it seemed to me, the leading towards communion with God, so constant in it, that I still could not condemn it, but treated every doubt as a temptation. I rested implicitly upon the text, ‘Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God,' and felt assured that no spirit making that confession could be of Satan. I had heard the confession made several times by the spirit which spoke in myself and others; and, resting in the confession, I persuaded myself I was resting in the faithfulness of God, and that His faithfulness was a sure defense. Most true it is, the faithfulness of God will never fail; but God requires of us the exercise of watchfulness, and it is but provoking Him when we shut our eyes to the teaching He gives us, and continue to assert and pledge His faithfulness to a thing which we ought to have seen to be untrue or unsafe. In the. case of Mr. F. the spirit in him confessed Jesus come in the flesh; and Miss H. also, when the other gifted persons had been called to confess, had herself given in power the confession equally with them. Thus then had it been shown us that the mere confession in words was not itself a proof of the spirit being of God; and this I ought to have seen, and to have searched more fully whether the spirit did really set out the truth as it is in Jesus, and not to have rested in the verbal confession.

“Whilst upon this point, it is necessary I should refer to a remarkable occurrence in Gloucestershire, which served to sustain my faith in the verbal confession as an unfailing trial of the spirit. In the latter end of the past year two children of a pious and exemplary clergyman there [a Mr. Probyn] had been made to speak by a supernatural power. They were twins, a boy and a girl, and only eight or nine years of age: children in whom nothing of a religious turn had been remarked. Their parents were unfortunately led to seek after the manifestations, believing them to be of the Spirit of God. From the time the mouths of the children were opened, their conduct seemed so much changed that they appeared most religions and devoted children. Their utterance was most astounding; beginning in the setting forth of Jesus, and calling to self-abasement before His cross; and preaching with such recital of scripture and such power of argument and exhortation as might be said to surpass many able ministers, and certainly quite out of the compass of children of their age and understanding. Having by this demonstration of power, of truth, and holiness, gained the confidence of their parents and friends, they were carried on to deliver prophecies of things which were coming to pass—then uttering commands to their parents and friends, and sending them here and there—denouncing the judgments of God upon the church and world, and setting a day for a particular manifestation of judgment.

“Shortly things were spoken by them which seemed to their parents contrary to scripture; and they were startled by an utterance forbidding to marry. This was so plainly the work of a false spirit, that their parents and friends were greatly distressed; and, though much awed by the influence which the power had obtained over them, they remembered they had forgotten the command, ‘Try the spirits'; and they wished to try the spirit in the children by the scripture test. They accordingly called the boy and told him their doubts, and that they must try the spirits. The boy seemed to be much wrought upon by the power, and in the supernatural utterance said, ‘Ye may try the spirits in men, but ye may not try the spirits in children. Ye will surely be punished.' They however persisted. Though the father was so much agitated as not to be able to do it, yet the curate addressed the spirit in the child, and demanded in the words of scripture a confession that Christ was come in the flesh. Paleness and agitation increased over the child till an utterance broke from him, ‘I will never confess it.' They were thus satisfied it was an evil power which spoke in him; and the curate went

on to say, ‘I command thee, thou false spirit, in the name of Jesus come out of the child.’ As the child afterward described his feelings, he felt as though a coldness were removed from his heart and passed away from him. They told the child if he felt the power coming on him again to resist it; and several times he did so. Once, some time afterward, from his mistaking something his parents had said to him, he did yield to it, and spoke supernaturally as before; but being corrected, and thenceforth resisting the power whenever it came upon him, he was entirely freed from it. This narrative which I first saw in print has been confirmed to me by one who was eye—and ear—witness of the whole. If any one should be inclined to doubt whether any supernatural agency has been manifested in the adults, and should be led to think excitement coupled with a fervid imagination is sufficient to account for all that has occurred in them, he will yet be compelled to acknowledge that, in these children at least, neither excitement nor imagination can account for it.”

Dr. Norton in his “Restoration of Apostles and Prophets,” chap. 3., pp. 74, 75, essays to explain away the damaging effect of this story, the truth of which he confirms in the main, though he lowers their age to “seven years,” and adds that “they also described and manifested bodily influences, proving that some invisible power had possession of them. Living in a distant village, they had never witnessed anything supernatural, and could not have been excited by the conversation of their parents, who were from home at its beginning, but hastened to them on receiving intelligence of it.” That the twins may have heard enough to excite them seems probable from the fact that their father was one of those who attended the Albury meetings, and could not be ignorant of, or uninterested in, the manifestations, good or ill, that had broken out in Scotland, and later on in England. The rest of the tale stands alike in both accounts; and the late Lord Rayleigh, who was there at the time, used to testify to the facts. Dr. N. makes the most of Mr. Irving's formal trial of his prophets on the receipt of this intelligence; but what could be the value of a test from one who was himself involved in positive and extreme heterodoxy?

The Catholic Apostolic Body or Irvingites: 5. Early History

CHAPTER I. EARLY HISTORY.

It is easy to turn aside, and hard to recover; but God is faithful, as Mr. Baxter was to prove. “Continuing however in the exercise of their power, and in daily teaching and preaching the things which had been declared in power, I was providentially led to an examination of doctrines, for neglecting which at an earlier period I justly suffered what came upon me. At the recurrence of the monthly meeting for exposition of scripture, to which I have before alluded, the friend to whose turn it had fallen to choose the subject, chose this, The Word was made flesh, with the special view, as I believe, of eliciting the views which were held by those of us who believed in the power, he himself deeming it a delusion. I stated what, as far as I am conscious of my own mind, had always been my view, viz.: That Jesus took the fallen flesh, but took it free from the law of sin which we are all born under—by fallen flesh, intending the consequences of the fall, as it respects our outward relations, and the constitution of our frame—we having become unsuited to the world, and the world unsuited to us; and we having become subject to pain, sickness, and other infirmities of frame; whereas Adam was made suitable to all around him, and all the world was suitable to him; and the diseases and infirmities to which we are subjected, had no place in him. Many persons identify the idea of fallen nature with sin. The fall was certainly the consequence of sin, and we, in our fallen estate, are under the law of sin, which rules in all our members. But it is clear the consequences of past sins are distinct from sin itself; and it is very easy to understand that Jesus took our nature in that condition into which sin had brought it, and yet took it free from all sin—as free as Adam before his fall possessed it. Jesus came into a fallen world, and took part of flesh and blood with those whom He was not ashamed to call brethren, and subjected as that flesh and blood was to all weakness and infirmity; and yet He so took it that He took no stain of sin nor taint of corruption with it. Being conceived of the Holy Ghost, He took manhood of the substance of the Virgin, but took it pure, and free from all sin. The law of the flesh, or law of sin, which was in the substance of the virgin, was not in His substance; so that in Him there were no motions of the fleshly or carnal mind, as there are in all of us.

“This my friend fully assented to; but he charged Mr. Irving with holding the opposite view, and asserting that the law of the flesh, or law of sin, was in Jesus, and only kept down by the Spirit. I could not see this, but contended as my persuasion was, that Mr. Irving by “sinful nature” meant no more than I meant by “fallen nature,” and that my views were the same as Mr. Irving's. After much discussion we parted, and I thought little more about it, until I received a letter from a member of Mr. Irving's church, making inquiries relative to the Indian chief, and the prophecy of the Jews before detailed; and in this letter, by way of postscript, he added that he had just heard Mr. Irving expound the eighth chapter of Romans, and he gathered Mr. Irving's view to be that our Lord had the carnal mind, or law of sin, to contend with. My correspondent was troubled at this, and asked my opinion upon it. He had heard two utterances in power, which, put together, seemed. to him conclusive that Jesus had not the carnal mind to keep down or contend with. One was from me on Mr. Irving's having asked whether Jesus was baptized with fire, the power

answered, “No, He had nothing in Him to be burnt out.” The other was from Mrs. C., who, explaining in power what the baptism by fire was, declared it should burn out the carnal mind.

“After this letter, I thought much on the matter; but my persuasion continued that Mr. Irving did not hold the law of sin to be in Jesus. I was, however, in power, made to write to him on the subject, setting forth that the carnal mind was not in Jesus, and some other points alluded to. After this my mind was at rest upon it, under the assurance that, if there had been any error in his view, it would be corrected from the message I had been made to write to him.

“God, however, graciously ordained that the matter should not rest here. A few days later a clergyman from Staffordshire came to me, who, though by no means disposed to receive the work, thought it his duty to inquire, perhaps more in the hope of my conviction than of his own. He examined very closely my views on the human nature of our Lord, and declared, when he heard them, that they were opposite to Mr. Irving's. He produced Mr. Irving's book on the subject to prove his assertion, and pointed out many passages. These, however, did not seem to prove his point, but on the following day, resuming his position, two passages were found which showed clearly that Mr. Irving conceived the workings of the law of sin were felt by our Lord (Hum. Nat. p. 23):`And in the face of all these certainties, if a man will say that His flesh was not sinful flesh as our's is, with the same dispositions, and propensities, and wants, and afflictions, then, I say, ‘God had sent that man strong delusion that he should believe a lie'; and page 24, ‘Now if there had not been in Christ's nature appetites, ambitions, and spiritual darkenings, how, I ask, could the devil have addressed these several temptations to His will?’ On reading over this, an utterance in power broke from me, ‘He has erred, he has erred’ —an utterance accompanied with great anguish under the feeling then that my friend's presence was grieving and quenching the Spirit; but which I now see to have been because the utterance was wrung from the spirit, as a desire of testifying against Mr. Irving to lull my inquiries. My friend's argument, which followed upon this, was very sound; he argued that, if Mr. Irving had been upholding false doctrine, it could not be the Spirit of God which was speaking in his church, or he would before this time have been rebuked. I, however, thought that the spirit in me had fully testified against this error, and, as I had never myself held it, the character of the work could not be involved in it.

“These discoveries, and the reference to Mr. Irving's book, led me to search more fully into the views he held; and I not only found, on the further reading of his work, that his views were unsound on the human nature of our Lord, but that he was also still more unsound on the doctrines concerning holiness in the flesh. Besides his works, I also consulted the published sermons of Mr. Campbell, who had preached in Scotland, and was spoken of as the great champion of the truth in Scotland; and he appeared to be involved in the same mistakes as Mr. Irving. I was much disturbed by this, because I thought how greatly the church was prejudiced by these false doctrines against what I yet deemed the manifestations of the Spirit; and in much heaviness I sat down to write to Mr. Irving, stating fully his error in conceiving the law of sin to be in the flesh of Jesus; and in stating also what I conceived to be the truth concerning our holiness: that as by faith accepted in Christ, and clothed in His righteousness, so we are in the sight of the Father holy and without blame; but whilst in the flesh, the law of sin remains even in them who are regenerate, and the flesh lusteth against the Spirit. And though our mark and aim should be to be perfect even as our Father is perfect; yet that we all come short of perfect holiness in the flesh, and are unprofitable servants. As Mr. Irving regarded me destined to the apostolic office, and set for the

instruction of his church, I had great confidence that he would receive this, and would be led to retract and abandon his errors, and thus remove a great stumbling-block from his door.

“A short time before this, I had received a communication from the Rev. Mr. Dow, who in Scotland was exercising the gift of utterance, after the same manner as those speaking in London. His sister had written to Mrs. Irving, and she had sent me an extract from the letter; declaring, that much additional light and power had been vouchsafed to Mr. Dow, and he had in the Spirit given a clear testimony confirming my prophecies, opening the six trumpets in the Book of Revelations, and giving a very full opening of each trumpet. This was an encouragement to me, giving me, as it did, the recognition, in my prophetic office, of the Scotch followers at Irongray.

“In a few days after I had sent to Mr. Irving, I received his answer, and as this letter was mainly instrumental in opening my eyes to the delusion by which we were bound, I give it at length.

“London, 21st April, 1832.

“My dear Brother, Read this letter with your eye on God. We have great need, especially the spiritual amongst us, to walk humbly with the Lord. Your first letter, containing the utterance of the Spirit, without any expression of his intention in sending it to me, led me very deeply to ponder the subject of our Lord's flesh, and to cry upon the Lord to examine me; and to the same exercise of soul had I been drawn by the utterance of the Spirit, and the experience of the spiritual of my flock in these days past. These things put me into a fit condition for receiving the full impression of your last letter, which arrived last night after I had preached a sermon on the Holy Generation of the Flesh of Christ. This I had done, in order to express anew, before my people, with all caution and consideration, what I firmly believe to be the truth; and to guard them against the effect of any rash or unguarded expressions which I might at any time have used. All night long, my soul, sleeping and waking, was exercised upon the subject of your last letter. And it being wonderfully ordered in God's providence that Mrs. C. should be in town a day or two; and that Miss E. C., though desirous to go home before breakfast, was so burdened as not to be able to go—these two prophetesses of the Lord, who have been His mouth of wisdom and warning to me and my church in all perplexities; I called along with my wife, who had read your letter, and read it to me, and having spread the whole matter before the Lord, and twice besought His presence, we proceeded to read your letters in order. Upon your first letter there was no utterance of the Spirit, nor expression of any kind amongst us, but that of assent. When we had read the two first pages of the second, wherein you reason upon the words of the Spirit, 'He has erred, he has erred,' given to you upon two sentences of my book; and bring forward your views of our Lord's flesh, and of the believer's holiness, in contradistinction from mine, we paused, and seeing there was so manifest a discrepancy between us, I solemnly besought the Lord that He would speak His own mind in the matter. Instantly the Spirit came upon Miss E. C., and, after speaking in a very grieved tone and spirit in a tongue, she was made to declare many words which I will not take upon me to attempt to repeat, seeing the Spirit has discountenanced such attempts. But the substance was most precisely this, that you had been snared by departing from the word and the testimony—that I had maintained the truth, and the Lord was well pleased with me for it—that I must not flinch now, but be more bold for it than heretofore—that He had honored me for it, and I must not draw back—that in some words I had erred, and that the word of the Spirit by you was therefore true; and that if I waited upon the Lord He would show me them by His Spirit, but that He had forgiven it because

He knew my heart was right towards Him—that I had maintained the truth, and must not draw back from maintaining it. Thereupon we knelt down, and having confessed my sin and thanked Him for His mercy, I proceeded to entreat Him for you, that you might be delivered from the snare in which you were taken concerning the flesh of Christ and the holiness of the believer. This done, I sought to recover and recount the substance of the utterance as above given, that by their help I might report it to you exactly. My wife was mentioning a doubt as to whether it should not simply be left to the Lord, and not dealt with in the understanding at all; seeing that in your letter you had gone astray by commenting in your own understanding on the words of the Spirit, ‘He hath erred,' as applicable to two sentences of my book, and applied them to my whole doctrine, which the Spirit had just declared to be the truth, 'that must be maintained’; when Mrs. C. was made to speak in a tongue with great authority and strength, and immediately after in English, to the effect that you had stumbled greatly by bringing your own carnal understanding to spiritual things; that truth in the inward parts, the law of God in the heart, wrought in us the fulfillment of the righteousness of the law in all our members; and that union with Jesus brought into us the holiness of Jesus in body, soul, and spirit; that the Lord would have a church upon the earth holy as He is holy, the light of the world as He is the light of the world; that some had sought to bring this about in the flesh; that you had been snared in the opposite extreme of denying it altogether, and making a distinction between Christ's holiness and that of His church; that you must be informed of it, because this it was which was preventing the work of the Lord. There was a third utterance through Miss E. C. to teach me Satan sought to overthrow my confidence in the truth, and to bring me into a snare; but that I was called upon to maintain it now more firmly than ever.

“There were no more utterances, but when we came to that part of your letter where you say, 'Concerning the vessels by whom He speaks, you have fearfully provoked Him, and they are ready to burst asunder under your hands,' there was great indignation felt by both the vessels of the Lord present, and great sense of injustice felt by myself. For, oh! dear brother, I have done all things to know and follow the Lord in respect of them. It was indeed said, I think in the Spirit, that this in you was the same spirit of ‘The accuser of the brethren,' which hath manifested itself lately amongst us in one of the gifted persons who spoke evil of me in the midst of the congregation. But the Lord hath showed him that though it was with power, the power was not from God but from Satan, to whom, by hard and unjust thoughts of me, he had opened the door. Ah, dear brother, you have surely been much overseen in some way or other—search it out. The thing you spoke of F. and of Miss H. was not of God. I fear, and am persuaded in my own mind, that you have not discriminated duly what is of God, and what is not of Him; and that sin in this matter, un-discerned and unconfessed, hath brought on greater falls, as we have seen amongst ourselves; and that now you are brought to oppose that very doctrines which alone can bring the church to be meet for her Bridegroom—That as He was holy in the flesh, so are we, through the grace of regeneration, brought to be holy—planted in a holy standing—the flesh dead to sin, as His flesh was dead to sin; and that by the baptism of the Holy Ghost we are brought into the fellowship of His power and fullness, to do the works which He also did, and greater works than these.

“When we came to that passage of your letter where you censure as fearfully erroneous a passage in the Day of Pentecost, we were all made to feel that you were forgetting what you yourself had been made to utter so abundantly concerning the baptism with fire and the spiritual ministry.

“I have read this to my wife, and Mrs. C., and Miss E. C.; and they say it is a full and exact account.

“And now, upon the whole, my well-beloved brother and prophet of the Lord, I give you counsel to search and prove what it is that sits so heavy upon your conscience, for the Lord will surely reveal it. Concerning the flesh of Christ, we will discourse when we meet. I believe it to have been no better than other flesh as to its passive qualities or properties, as a creature thing. But that the power of the Son of God, as Son of man in it, believing in the Father, did for His obedience to become Son of man, receive such a measure of the Holy Ghost as sufficed to resist its own proclivity to the world and to Satan, and to make it obedient unto God in all things, which measure of the Spirit He received in His generation, and so had holy flesh; and by exercise of the same faith, He kept His vineyard holy, and presented it holy to the great Husbandman. Regeneration, through faith, sealed in baptism, doth give to us the same measure of the Spirit to do the same work of making our flesh the holy thing, the temple of the Holy Ghost, body, soul, and spirit holy, wherefore we have the name ‘saints,' or ‘holy ones,' ‘sons of God,' as He received those names in virtue of His generation of the Holy Ghost. If we were to meet, I think we would not find much difference of mind as to the flesh of Christ. But as to your view of holiness, it is the very deepest and darkest and subtlest snare of the enemy. If you understood thoroughly the one subject, you would understand thoroughly the other. I say not that Christ had the motions of the flesh, but that the law of the flesh was there all present; but that where as in us it is set on fire by an evil life, in Him it was by a holy life put down, and His flesh brought to be a holy altar, whereon the sacrifices and offerings for the sin of the world, and the whole burnt offerings of sorrow, and confession, and penitence for others, might be ever offered up. And thus ought we to be, and shall be, when the flesh becomes the sack-cloth covering.

“Oh! brother, I have had many trials, but the Lord hath sustained me, and I dwell before Him in peace of soul, though in much sorrow because of the condition of His church. I shall be glad when we meet. But, oh! I beseech you, lay to heart the words which have been spoken by the Spirit, and doubt any words which may be spoken in you contrary thereto. For though an angel from heaven should come to me, testifying to your views of holiness, I would not receive him

“` Do you hold correspondence with any of my flock, that you speak so positively, yet so unjustly, concerning my treatment of the spiritual persons? or is there some meaning couched under it which I do not understand? Did the Spirit say so in you? If so, doubt that spirit; for certainly it is not true, they themselves being witnesses.

“Fare you well. May the Lord have you in His holy keeping. Amen. Your faithful brother,

EDWARD IRVING.'

“This letter was at once a great blow to me. Here I saw doctrines, which I could never have believed Mr. Irving held, not only avowed by him, but sustained and enforced by the utterances, in power, of those who were deemed gifted persons. I had no copy of my own letters, and had the utterances been confined to a denial of the accuracy of my views, I should not have dared to question it, as I should rather have attributed it to some inaccuracy of statement. But here was an unqualified approval of Mr. Irving's views; and in the same letter, those views broadly stated without disguise, and clearly involving heresies most fearful and appalling.”

[NOTE. The Editor thinks it well to state here, that, while giving Mr. B.'s testimony as much the most important he knows on the real character of the Irvingite movement, and especially on the fact of powers beyond man, yet not of God though professing to be, he does not mean to endorse all Mr. B.'s thoughts or expressions. He does not, for instance, approve of applying “fallen flesh” to the human nature of Christ, which was a body prepared of God by the power of the Spirit of God, beyond Adam's even when unfallen. But Mr. B.'s doctrine is sound in the main.]

The Catholic Apostolic Body or Irvingites: 6. Early History

CHAPTER I. EARLY HISTORY.

“That there was in Christ's flesh a proclivity to the world and to Satan and that Christ received such a measure of the Holy Ghost as sufficed to resist this proclivity, is a doctrine so fearfully erroneous, that I cannot conceive anyone who has at all learned Christ, unless he be blinded by delusion, can allow himself for a moment to entertain. Christ, the Holy Thing as born of the virgin, to whom the prince of this world cometh, and findeth nothing in Me; also holy, harmless, and undefiled—that in His flesh there could be a proclivity to Satan, which needed to be resisted; or that He, of whom it is declared, that God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him, should be held to have received only a measure of the Spirit, and this for the purpose of resisting a sinful tendency in His flesh: this is a departure from the truth, which is broad as the day. But if any one's eyes should be holden that he cannot see its errors, singly considered; when it is conjointly affirmed, that regeneration through faith, sealed in baptism, cloth give to us the same measure of the Spirit, to do the same work of making our flesh the holy thing—dark indeed, must be our state, if we do not instantly see how Christ is first abased towards our sinful condition, and we next exalted to be put on an equality with Him: as though Christ had a work to do in making His own flesh holy, and we are enabled to do the same work and make our flesh holy. What said the apostle Paul, after he was called to his apostleship, and had been caught up into the third heaven, and had received gifts of the Holy Ghost abounding above all others? ‘I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.' And again, ‘So that with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with flesh the law of sin.' And what does he say of every believer who is born again of the Spirit of God? ‘If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin.' Here is no holiness of flesh, but a plain declaration, that even in those in whom Christ dwells the body is dead because of sin, and the flesh has no good things, but serves the law of sin. The apostle's glorying was not that he had made his flesh holy, but the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, which made us free from the law of sin and death; adding, if we live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. The living after the Spirit, and mortifying the deeds of the body, was the apostle's state, and is our state, as many of us as are born of God; whereas, if our flesh were made holy, what need would there be to mortify it?

“I have heard the sophistry which denies that the tendency or proclivity to sin is itself sin, and which dares, therefore, to ascribe the first to our beloved Lord in His human nature, while it is properly indignant at the second. As it regards ourselves, I am ready to admit, that God does not bring us into judgment for such a tendency to sin, when we mortify and resist it, the apostle showing the ground of such mercy, where it is written, ‘Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.' But yet we must say, as expressed in the article of our church, The apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin. But who shall say that in our Lord the law of the flesh was all present, but by a holy life kept down, without feeling that such a statement compromises the character of ‘holy, and undefiled?’ The law of the flesh is the law, of sin and death, or, in other words, that corruption of nature which is called the lust of the flesh, and

which is the mark and consequence of original sin. Now, surely all will agree, that not a breath or suggestion of sin—no lust—no desire—ever arose in or from the flesh of our blessed Lord. The law of the flesh, which in us daily sends up streams of corrupt desires, though our flesh never was in Him nor ever could be in Him, so as to need to be resisted or kept down. To suppose this corruption to be in Jesus, is to deny His holiness.

However much, and however completely you may affirm it to be kept down, if it ever was there, holy and undefiled are set aside at once.

“I would not lay hold of words to convict a man of heresy, if his real intention was not comprised in those words. Every man may err in words; and hard indeed is it, if we should lie in wait for one another, to make a man an offender for a word. The letter copied, however, does so clearly show Mr. Irving's mind, that, far from doubting whether it is not a matter of words, it is very obvious that his general design and view is unsound. As gathered from the letter itself, and as confirmed by subsequent conversations with him, I gather his general design or broad doctrine to be this—That Christ Jesus, though God as well as man, yet was a man in all respects such as we are, and was by the power of the Holy Ghost, from His generation to His death, upheld in holiness and perfect parity; and that we receiving through His blood the pardon of past sins, are now called to receive the Holy Ghost; and by the same power of the Holy Ghost, shall, if we faint not, be ourselves, in the flesh, brought into and upheld in holiness and perfect purity, as fully as Jesus was.

“To sustain these propositions, Mr. Irving sees it necessary to suppose the law of sin to have been in the flesh of Jesus: otherwise the work of the Holy Ghost, in sustaining Jesus in perfect holiness, would be no precedent nor assurance to us, that by the Holy Ghost we can be sustained in equal holiness. Here then, lies the first error, in ascribing to Jesus that corruption of nature, as it regards His flesh, which belongs to all of us. The next error lies in putting out of sight the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to us, which is our wedding garment, and in which we are holy and without blame in the sight of the Father—seen as standing in Christ; and, in the stead of this, requiring us to work out a personal holiness, and, by the power of the Spirit, to make ourselves holy as Christ was holy.”

It is not needful to give all the workings of Mr. B.'s conscience more fully. “These considerations of doctrine weighed with me, and I could not for a moment doubt the erroneousness of Mr. Irving's views. I was then of necessity compelled to conclude the utterances which supported these views were not of the Spirit of God. Upon this a doubt arose in my own mind, which however I trembled to entertain; and yet with such facts before me I could not reject: whether the whole work was not of Satan. I could not conceive of a person speaking at one moment by the Spirit of God, and the next by the spirit of Satan. Moreover it had been declared in the power by the mouth of Mrs. C., Miss E. C., and my own mouth, that God would guard the utterances of His prophets, and that they should never be permitted to speak by the power of Satan. According therefore to my view and understanding of scripture, a false utterance convicted a person of being a false prophet; and this was also according to the interpretation of the power I had been acting under. Mrs. C., Miss E. C., and Mr. T. were therefore on both grounds manifestly to be deemed false prophets; and this, as to the two former, upon a test of scripture doctrine. Then was not I convicted as a false prophet by the non-fulfillment of the words I had spoken according to the test in the book of Deuteronomy? And might not the whole be accounted for as a chastisement of God sent for the correction of

heresy? All who were caught in it having drank of, or sustained, that heresy. These questions and considerations weighed upon my mind and almost worked conviction.

“On the other hand so strongly was the whole interwoven with interpretations of scripture, and so much of the fruits of the Spirit had I seemed to find under it, so entirely had I become pledged to the work, and my character and consistency become involved in it, I paused and weighed again and again the several facts and proof, trembling at entertaining doubts at all.

“It had been very providentially ordered that I was expecting a professional call from home on the very day succeeding the arrival of Mr. Irving's letter; and I had arranged for a week's absence. The same post which brought me this letter brought me also a respite of my engagement, and left me at liberty. Otherwise, having engagements to preach almost every morning and evening, I should have been still more perplexed as to my course. If I stayed from preaching, it might overthrow the faith of many, and give occasion to the enemy to traduce the work; if I went on preaching it whilst I had doubts upon it, how could I answer it to conscience? There would have been no time for consideration, but for this providential opening; and I at once availed myself of it to visit the brother to whom I have before alluded. During the journey, which occupied two days, I was, as may be supposed, engaged in consideration Of the subject; and the whole train of circumstances from the beginning, with the successive failures of prophecy and contradiction of utterance, when calmly reviewed and compared with the present fact of the support of false doctrine, were so strongly affirmative of the evil origin of the work, that, however supernatural I had found it and still knew it to be, I was convinced it must be a work of Satan who, as an angel of light, was permitted for a time to deceive us.

“My brother, who had continued speaking in the power, examined the doctrines and fully agreed in their fearful errors. He weighed also the facts which I had to state to him, and joining them with other facts which had occurred within his own observation, he arrived of the same conclusion as myself.

“Being anxious to communicate with Mr. Irving I traveled on to London, and reached him on the morning of his appearance before the presbytery of London. Calling him and Mr. J. C. apart, I told them my conviction that we had all been speaking by a lying spirit, and not by the Spirit of the Lord. He said it was impossible God could have sent us strong delusions, for that was His final judgment upon the wicked; and we at least thought ourselves seeking after the Lord, and desiring His glory. I answered, I believed God had sent it as a chastisement for pride and lofty imaginations; that we had been lifted up in our hearts, and God would humble us. He was astounded, but asked me to stay with them a little. I replied, I could not without rebuking the utterance, if it were made by any of the speakers in my presence; and as he would not suffer this, we parted. I saw him again in the evening; and on the succeeding morning I endeavored to convince him of his error of doctrine, and our delusions concerning the work of the Spirit; but he was so shut up, he could not see either. I particularly pressed, upon Miss E. C. and Mrs. C., and before him also, the non-fulfillment of the word, and particularly the falseness of that prophecy which they, as well as myself, had given—that God would guard the utterance of His prophets, and not suffer Satan to speak by them; whereas in the case of Mr. T [aplin] alluded to in Mr. Irving's letter, he who was and (I believe) is still received as a prophet, had, in the midst of the congregation, with tongues, and with English, spoken evil of Mr. Irving; and Miss E. C. had since in

utterance declared he spoke it of Satan. They however could not see the non-fulfillment in the other cases; and in this case they said we must have mistaken the meaning of the utterance—that it could not mean God would keep the utterance always, but when they were speaking, He would not suffer Satan to mingle words with His word: a most miserable subterfuge.

“The argument on which Mr. Irving mainly relied for parrying the difficulties was this—that the same person might at one moment speak by the Spirit of God, and the next moment by an evil spirit. He urged therefore, that those things which had failed were from the false spirit, and those which were fulfilled were of God. I had the most distinct remembrance, when I first heard Mr. Irving preach upon the utterances, that he preached the utterances, being the voice of God, were pure water without admixture—that he might in his exposition as a man fail, or fall into error, but in the word of the Lord, ministered by the prophets in their utterances, the most entire and implicit confidence might be placed, as in every respect and purely the truth. Out of this position lie was, however, evidently driven by the appalling fact of the prophets, before all the congregation, denouncing him as the cause of the Lord's anger against the congregation—this denunciation coming with every usual demonstration of power and tongues. The only solution now to be found was, that the utterance at one time might be of God, and at another time of Satan, even in the same person. For if this were not admitted, Mr. T., being himself recognized as having spoken by God in his former utterances and by Satan in this. would either overturn the whole fabric of the spiritual gifts and falsify the claims of the prophets, or must be himself still received as a prophet, notwithstanding his false utterance.

“The mere enunciation of the proportion of a varying origin, whilst the outward demonstration remained the same, was enough to shake even the nerves of Mr. Irving. To be under the necessity of telling such a fact to his congregation, and thereby assuring them that they could no longer give credence to the utterances without deciding upon the origin of each message; to tell them moreover, that no one could decide this without the gift of the discernment of spirits; and lastly that no member of his church yet possessed that gift—this would seem beyond the courage of any minister, and beyond the power of belief of any people. To this however was Mr. Irving reduced, and to this were his people subjected.

“It was attempted to decide the origin of the utterance in the mind of the speakers from whom it came by prescribing a certain frame (e.g. a calm sense of the love of God in Christ and of our abiding therein), as the proof of the utterance from the Spirit of God; and an opposite state of mind, as a proof of the utterance being deceitful. This, however, I could experimentally contradict. For several utterances which were still held true, and particularly that which Mr. Dow had confirmed, were made when I was in the disturbed frame; and others which had proved false were given under the prescribed heavenly frame; and I was fully persuaded that no such line of distinction could honestly be drawn” (pp. 116-120).

We may leave Mr. I.'s argument on Jer. 15:7 (a strange and misleading juxtaposition, and yet more Ezek. 14:9), as well as Mr. B.'s reply in disproof. Deut. 13. and 18. are, as he shows, quite at issue with the desired excuse for error in a true prophet from God's word. From p. 123 we may cite: “I am overwhelmed (says Mr. B.) with the remembrance of my own blindness and unfaithfulness by hesitating at all after one instance of the failure of the word; and I may well shut my mouth against the like offense in others. But I desire to confess my sin, and in love to those

who like myself are erring, to pray them take warning and no longer to continue such a provocation.

“It is not necessary I should enter into any subsequent communications which have passed with those holding the manifestations. After my first visit, I found the utterance amongst them warned them against having intercourse with me; and they now shut themselves up, refusing to hear arguments, or discuss the subject at all. It may however be only just towards Mr. Irving that I should give another letter of his, written some months after my renunciation of their views; as he there again fully sets forth his doctrinal views, and if he intended this in any particular to correct the expressions in his former letter, he ought to have the benefit of it.

“London, July 6,1832.

“My dear brother, I can no longer refrain from writing you in a few words what I believe to be a most heinous sin under the oppression of which you are lying bound. It is the sin of blaspheming the ministers, and prophets, and church of God, and calling us ministers of Satan under the form of an angel of light. Not to bear testimony of myself, still less to judge thee, O brother, do I say this, but to assure thee that herein thou hast sinned, and dost sin exceedingly, nor wilt be restored till thou restore thyself to charity with thy brethren who have never but loved thee.

“My testimony to Jesus is that in our flesh He was most holy. That His flesh was in itself no otherwise conditioned, nor is otherwise to be defined than ours, with all its laws, properties, and propensities. But through His anointing of it, and upholding of it from first to last, it hath no other properties nor propensities than those which may be predicated of God—holy as He is, pure as He is, yet temptable, mortal, and corruptible as ours—until the resurrection changed its form and fashion altogether.

“Concerning the holiness of the believer, my testimony is that he ought never to be less holy both in flesh and spirit than Jesus was; and that the same power of God incarnate, which presented Christ's flesh and Spirit holy, is bestowed upon the believer at baptism, to present his flesh and spirit always holy through faith. And every short-coming from holiness is not of necessity, nor of accident, nor of circumstance, but of positive will not to believe, and not to receive the power of regeneration, which is the continuance unto us of the power of generation in Jesus. Wherefore we are called ‘holy ones,' and ‘sons of God,' as he was called ‘The holy Thing,' and ‘Son of God.' He kept the name of the Father, and glorified it: we have not kept it, and therefore need continual atonement and intercession.

“Furthermore, concerning the baptism of the Holy Ghost, my testimony is, and ever has been, that it is the indwelling of the Father in the members, after what manner He dwelt in the Head while on earth, for the same ends and for what other ends the Father may have to accomplish by His church until He comes.

“Now, brother, you may not apprehend these things, thy natural mind being very formal and wedded to its forms; whereas the fashion of my natural mind is rather ideal, or spiritual (!). But because then apprehendest not the truth in that form in which I do, shouldest thou say that thy brother hath a devil, when thou knowest from my fruits that I serve God with a pure conscience? And my dear flock thou hast misrepresented, whom yet thou knowest not. My love to thy soul, my desire to see thee standing where God set thee—a spiritual minister beareth no longer that this sin

should be upon thee. Repent of it, and ask forgiveness of the Lord. I fully forgive thee, and love thee with a pure heart reverently, as I have ever done and never ceased to do, though thy words and letters, of which I have seen some and heard of others, have sore wounded me. Repent of thy rash judgments against the children of God, that thou mayest be healed of thy sin. I write to thee as a man of God, and minister of His gospel, even thy brother in great love. For I know thou art an honest man, though thou hast greatly erred through thy rashness. Your faithful brother,

EDWARD IRVING.'

Some general characteristics in the work casting suspicion on it, which follow in pp. 126-129, we may leave, as also Mr. B.'s testimony to the sincere piety and devotedness of Mr. I. and others with him whom he knew, with his judgment of the inadequacy of the tests applied (pp. 129-133). In this last page he adds his personal experience of the tongue. “A few days before the prophecy of my call to the apostolic office, whilst sitting at home, a mighty power came upon me, but for a considerable time no impulse to utterance; presently a sentence in French was vividly set before my mind, and under an impulse to utterance was spoken. Then in a little time sentences in Latin were in like manner uttered, and with short intervals sentences in many other languages, judging from the sound and the different exercise of the enunciating organs. My wife who was with me declared some of them to be Italian and Spanish; the first she can read and translate, the second she knows but little of. In this case she was not able to interpret nor retain the words as they were uttered. All the time of these utterances I was greatly tried in mind. After the first sentence an impulse to utterance continued on me, and most painfully I retained it, my conviction being that until something was set before me to utter, I ought not to yield my tongue to utterance. Yet I was troubled by the doubt what could the impulse mean, if I were not to yield to it. Under the trial I did yield my tongue for a few moments, but the utterance that broke from me seemed so discordant that I concluded the impulse without words given was a temptation; and I retained it, except as words were given me, and then I yielded. Sometimes single words were given me, and sometimes sentences, though I could recognize neither the words nor sentences as any language I knew, except those which were French or Latin. What strengthened me, upon after consideration, in the opinion that I ought not to yield my tongue was the remembrance that I had heard Mr. Irving say, when explaining how the utterance in tongue first came upon Mr. T., that he had words and sentences set before him. Immediately after this exercise there came an utterance in English, declaring that the gift of tongues, which was manifest in London, was nothing more than that of the tongue needing interpretation, manifested formerly in the Corinthian church; but that shortly the Lord would bestow the Pentecostal gift, enabling those who received it to preach in all languages to the nations of the earth. I was on several other occasions exercised in this same way, speaking detached words and sentences, but never a connected discourse.

“When I went to London after this, I questioned those who spoke in the tongues, whether they had the words and sentences given, or yielded their tongues to the impulse of utterance without having them. They answered almost entirely the latter, though sometimes also the former. I was also in London made to confirm in utterance before Mr. Irving what I had spoken here concerning the Pentecostal gift of tongues for preaching; and such was the readiness with which he yielded to the utterances, that, though he had both written and published that the Pentecostal gift was not for preaching, he at once yielded and confessed his error, giving thanks for the correction. Oh! that he may manifest the same ingenuousness in abandoning his opinion concerning the power, when,

weighing its fruits, he sees it is not of God.

“My persuasion concerning the unknown tongue as it is called (in which I myself was very little experienced) is, that it is no language whatever, but a mere collection of words and sentences; and in the lengthened discourses is, much of it, a jargon of sounds” (p. 134). To this we may all agree, save in the unfounded distinction as to Corinth, which was clearly similar to Pentecost. How could a sober Christian think the Holy Spirit conferred there or anywhere “a jargon of sound”? Neander, in his History of the Planting of Christianity, reasons on the “tongues” in 1 Cor. 12; 14 as ecstatic to set aside the force of Acts 2:6-8; but such efforts to explain away scripture are as lamentable as vain. The Lord had promised this sign in Mark 16:17.

Chapter 39

The Catholic Apostolic Body or Irvingites: 7. Early History

There is a fearless and distressing paper in the last vol. of the Morning Watch (“What caused Mr. Baxter's fall?” 7:129-140), so characteristic of this early phase, that it may fitly follow Mr. Baxter's Narrative.

“It is written in the scriptures, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Give me, O God, the heart purged by Christ's blood, the single eye of sincerity and truth, that I may now clearly set and show forth the mystery of Thy dealings with my friend, and more than brother, Robert Baxter, who having been called of Thee as a prophet, and as such been attested of Thy Spirit, an approven of Thy church, hath now openly set himself against Thee to pull down that which Thou didst set him to build up. To me it appertaineth not to sit in judgment upon him, nor to account for the inconsistencies wherewith he chargeth the Spirit that spoke in him; nor to distinguish whether these be really inconsistencies, or only inconsistencies between the spiritual word and his own interpretation thereof; and, if real spiritual inconsistencies there be, to determine whether, like Saul, he may have been visited by an evil spirit from the Lord, for his haste and unbelief, or whether he may, being still a true prophet, have spoken presumptuously and beyond the analogy of faith, or whether being, like Balaam, at heart a Moabite, he may have been drawn out from the river of his people, and constrained against his proper nature to bless the people of God—to determine whether of these be the manner of his fall, I undertake not, because he standeth not at my bar, nor is he one of my flock; but in love to his soul, and the souls of those whom he hath stumbled, and chiefly for the glory of God, I will show forth the righteousness of God in permitting him to be brought thus low.

“Robert Baxter is a vessel marred upon the wheel of the Potter, whom the Potter would yet make into a good vessel for the hand of the King, to be filled with treasures of glory for the good of the church. But he fighteth sore against the gracious purpose of his Maker, and standeth in peril of being dashed and broken in pieces. The Lord called him to be a prophet and more than a prophet; a strong stone, but not the Corner stone, of His house; nor yet the Builder thereof, though a master builder under the Builder, Whose name is The Branch. The Lord, which is the word of God, opened his mouth in mighty utterances, of things unutterable by the lip, inconceivable to the mind, of man; and gave them forth with a richness and variety and exuberance of knowledge, with a majesty and strength, with a melody and power of harmony, and yet with a calmness and distinctness and exactness, yea, and minuteness of truth and beauty, which if Satan hath power to give, then Satan may have written all the oracles of God. [Is not this presumptuous for a saint to write?] For verily there be no parallels to the words which he spake, nor to the manner and method of his discourse, but those which the universal church hath stamped by the name of the word of God (!) If Satan, as an angel of light and a minister of righteousness, can give forth the honor, the nobility, the grandeur, the glorious truths, which not thy poor formal intellect, Robert Baxter, but He that spake them in defiance of thy formal intellect did utter, in my hearing, and in the hearing of the church—then say I again, Satan may have indited the word of God [shame on thee, Edward Irving], which is of all blasphemy the most horrible and guilty.

“Yet for all this, Robert Baxter, a man of godly spirit but yet an enthralled understanding; a man of truth in the inward parts, but of tradition in the outward; a man in his reason taught of God, but in his understanding taught of the traditions of men; a man who, in unfolding the forms of godliness in the law and the traditions of the church, surpasseth the men of this day, as is manifest from his two papers in this work, but whose spirit hath not informed his understanding with the heavenly life—he, even such an one, hath endeavored to show that the mighty Spirit which spake in him these utterances of honor and glory is no other than the spirit of error; for he is too honest a man to believe, or to say, that it was excitement of the flesh. He knoweth too well what an ungodly thing—what a rash, riotous, turbulent, wayward, and contradictory thing—the flesh is, to mistake for its excitement that heavenly rapture, that sober certainty of truth and collected wisdom of God which first enwrapped him into divine assurance of faith, and love, and rest, and then poured forth through him streams of the waters of life, beams of the sun of glory. Oh! my brother, my brother! Where is thy discernment gone between God and Satan, good and evil, Spirit and flesh, that thou shouldest thus turn aside like a deceitful bow in the hand of thy Maker! Here therefore is an enigma and a dark riddle; that a man, with more formal theology in him than most men I know of, should have committed the most fearful sin of naming the Spirit of truth and holiness by the name of the father of lies. And how cometh this to pass? Where is the interpreter to interpret this parable?

“It cometh to pass from this, that the natural understanding apprehendeth not the things of the Spirit of God. No, nor no single mind of even the spiritual comprehendeth all the words and ways of God; which are spoken not for one man, but for the church of many members composed; nor for the church of one generation, but for the church of all generations; for no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation, but holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. And least of all is the prophet himself capable of resolving his own words. Sufficient is it for the tongue to have the glory of utterance. The ear must have the glory of hearing; the heart the glory of understanding; and the mind the glory of bringing forth the flowers and fruits of the word rooted in the heart of love. But thou, Robert Baxter, prophet of the Lord, in thy rashness, in thy strength of head, in thy solitary self-sufficiency, in thy great personal steadfastness for there was no soldier like thee in all the camp for personal single combat; thou wast a rock beside other men; a lion wast thou amongst the beasts of the field; yet see, O brother, how thou art fallen before the rock of Israel, the Lion of the tribe of Judah— thou thoughtest by thine own capacity to measure the capacity of the word that then wast made instrumental to utter. This was the reason wherefore God took thee to use thee, that thou hadst strong personal parts, in a day of confederacies. Thou wast not afraid to trust thy God; and thy God did not belie thy trust. He did open thy mouth in majesty, but not until He had found an ear to hear, a heart to understand, and a mind to realize, in the church whereof I am the pastor. And if thou hadst heeded the counsel of Him That sent thee, and staid there where thy mouth was opened until the power was given, it would have been well with thee at this day, instead of being very evil. For, O man, thou art not the pillar and ground of the truth, strong though thy manhood be; the church is the pillar and ground of the truth. Therefore it is thou hast fallen, because thou wouldst be both giver and receiver, both utterer and container, both prophet and angel, and pastor and teacher; and so, by usurping all offices, which dignity pertaineth to Jesus, thou hast lost all, and become nothing but a stumbling-block in the way of the children of the Lord.

“Ever and anon, as thou didst utter a thing, thou wouldst understand it; thou wouldst settle down into space and time the word of the Lord, which is unto all generations. The Spirit in the prophets warned thee of this; and I, according to the light given unto me, did also warn, and in some cases was able to deliver thee. But still thou wouldst be grasping with thy fist the word of the Lord; and with thine understanding, which is formal and fashioned according to the traditions of men, thou wouldst be containing the word of the Lord. Did ever Isaiah think of comprehending what the lips of Isaiah spake? And when Jeremiah gave formal expectation to his words, instead of patience and hope, his feet had well-nigh slipped; and he was only brought back from this state of saying, ‘I will speak no more in this name,' by his obedience greater than thine, which, when the fire burned within him, constrained him to speak. But thou, O man, hast not grace to do this; for thou hast called the Spirit of God the spirit of evil; and the word of thy God the word of the father of lies. Take heed, take heed, O my brother, lest the Lord harden thy heart, as He hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and lest thou perish, as Balaam did, in the slaughter of Midian and Moab.

“God is righteous in his dealings with Robert Baxter, whom, for the latter years that I have known him, He hath led by a gentle and steady hand into the knowledge of all the forms of truth written in His word, especially of the purpose which He hath laid in the Christ. I say, the Lord led him onward with a steady hand into the forms of the truth; and at the same time gave him a child's heart for simplicity and gentleness. A tender husband, and a tender father, and a tender friend, did He make thee, O my brother. But thy heart lay in its guileless simplicity of childhood, and did not grow up to fill the majestic forms of thine understanding with the life of God. Thou buildest, and blandest in thine understanding; thou didst fashion and mold until thou hadst made it a noble temple; but the voice within it was but the voice of a child. Thine understanding was not a living temple. Thou hadst quickened none of thine articles of faith, none of thy forms of truth. They were but an outward shape, whose proportions thou couldst measure; not the food of an inward joy, not the growth of an inward principle of organic life. Thy child-like spirit from within the temple called upon thy Maker for strength and power; thou didst lie sore upon thy Father, thou didst entreat Him much, and thy Father could not refuse thee thy desire. But well knowing what rendings His Spirit must make in the temple which thou hadst built around thee, He sent thee first into the bosom of a living temple—a church whose understanding of truth had grown out of a vital informing principle; and He would have had thee submit thy building of man to the building of God. And He did put thee there to prophesy to the builders of the house, to ask change of raiment for Joshua, and to strengthen the hands of Zerubbabel; but thou wouldst not, thou wouldst be both prophet and church unto thyself. The Lord saw that He must either part with thee for His prophet, or part with us for His church. So, when thou hadst sown among us the seed of hope, the hope of the Man-child, He shut thy mouth, like Zacharias, for disbelieving the word and asking for a sign; and thou shalt be dumb like him for a season; aye, and until thou shalt yield thyself to be fashioned and builded by the Spirit of God, according to His mind, and not according to thine own.

“All thy doctrines concerning our Lord's flesh, and concerning regeneration, and concerning the holiness of the believer, and concerning the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, are dead letters of tradition, as thou holdest them, blind conceptions, having in them a form of godliness without the power. O brother! I would teach thee, for I am set as a teacher in the house of God; but thou wilt not be taught. Those letters, which, contrary to all honor and friendship—letters, so private, so holy—those two letters of mine, which thou hast dared (or rather, I should say, been constrained

by God overruling thine evil) to publish, would have taught thee the truth, the living truth of God, concerning these great heads of doctrine. But thou wilt not be taught by any man, by any ordinance; nay, thou wilt not be taught by the Comforter dwelling within thee: how shouldst thou be taught by man? Yet once more, and for the multitude that follow after thee, I will set forth distinctly what my faith is, what the only living faith is, concerning these matters" (pp. 129-133).

Next follows a bold exposition of Mr. Irving's peculiar doctrine, too sad and evil to be transferred to these pages, which will fall elsewhere for judgment by God's word. Suffice it to cite the peroration in pp. 139, 140. "But what serveth this dispensation to the church? Much, every way. Chiefly to mar the work in the sight of the multitude, who were gaping after it, as to a market-place of mighty power and signs and wonders—to separate those who bowed the knee to the waters of the Spirit and drank, from those who did but stoop their girded loins and stretch down the hand of faith to the brook that runneth in the way; to send back the thousands to their homes, while the handful pass onward with Gideon to the fiery fight. For this battle is not with confused noise and garments rolled in blood, but with burning and fuel of fire: whereunto who would send the hay, the wood, the stubble, and the chaff? Nay, but only the gold and silver and precious stones may abide that fiery conflict. Therefore is it that God hath permitted thee to put forth thine own shame, which will serve as a touchstone, to distinguish the men that have been feeding upon the word of God, from the men who have been eyeing it with suspicion, lying in wait for the faltering of their God, and taking good heed to risk nothing for the Savior of their souls. But, O ye little ones, who are stumbled by this stumbling-block which a giant has put in your way—for he is a very mighty man—know the word of the Lord to Zernbbabel: 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.' Taste and see that God is good: prove ye the meat by the eating of it; know ye Satan from Jesus by the house which he buildeth; come amongst us, and see whether we be a church of the living God, or a synagogue of Satan. Ah! this pang woundeth the deepest, that Satan should have the credit of such a work! O thou enemy, thou hast triumphed, but thy triumph is short! And thou, Robert Baxter, hast lifted up Satan in the sight of many men, and crowned him as the author of a work which has been, and is, the joy and edification of thousands of saints. Be ashamed! Fear and tremble! Repent of thy wickedness, and pray, if haply the thought of thy heart, the word of thy mouth, and the work of thy hand, may be forgiven.

EDWARD IRVING."

The fact is, that Mr. B. held to the faith of God's elect for his soul, but was only too long deaf to the strange and fatal heterodoxy of Mr. I., partly through the great personal influence and surpassing ability of the latter, partly through the evil power to which he had too long surrendered himself. But Mr. I. was more honest than most false teachers. There was nothing privy about him. He was open, not to say arrogant, enough in the foregoing. It was (to adopt their phraseology) before the ordinances were fully set up, when an angel laid down that, if he taught positive error, none must question it, as the authority was responsible to God! But even Mr. I. does pave the way for denying the Christian's title to judge, where a prophecy failed manifestly, on the perversion of 2 Peter 1:20, that no prophecy is of private interpretation. They are not the only party in Christendom that would supersede (by the church, or the clergy) the believer's direct subjection to the Lord by scripture. Faith is undermined whenever the alleged voice of God—not in man, or the people, but in the church—is made superior to the written word. Even the natural honesty of Mr. I's soul was impaired, as we may see; but as a whole, he was plain-spoken, where he sets out his error,

though he well knew how offensive it was to the mass of those he had once respected and loved. He was taken away prematurely, in spite of many a prophecy which promised him grand results in the near future. God cut short, in mercy, as well as judgment, a career of delusion. For even he, uncompromising as he was, submitted absolutely to the spirit in the gifted, which sanctioned his evil doctrine against Christ (though not all his expressions), and he was powerless before the ordinances which he idolized. Who indeed could or ought to resist if he believed it was God speaking?

The Catholic Apostolic Body or Irvingites: 8. Development

CHAPTER II. DEVELOPMENT.

A serious stride was made early after the expulsion from Regent Square and the temporary use of a room from May 6th, 1832, in Gray's Inn Road. Let them tell their own story. Dr. Norton thus describes the new departure in his book, already cited, using the highly colored words of another's “Narrative"—

“October 19 was the first day of our meeting in Newman Street. After the first prayer a sound of triumphant joy through Mr.—[Irving] calling upon us to praise the Lord, and blessing Him that He had given rest to His people. Then followed a setting before us the prospect of continued conflict; sure victory to the faithful, but the hosts of the Lord diminishing day by day. It was said, 'Remember Midian the Lord will conquer by few. Ye shall be despised, ye shall be rejected; the scorn of all men; ye shall know what it is to be empty vessels, but oh! they shall be fitted to contain the glory!' Much manifestation of the Spirit followed through others of the gifted persons in every interval of the service.

“At the conclusion the pastor was about to pronounce the blessing as usual, when Mr. D[rummond] rose in the power of the Holy Ghost and blessed the people. The next evening what was our joy on hearing Mr. C[ardale] speaking in the power of the Spirit! Many utterances followed in much connection of subject in reference to Zech. 10, Joel 2, Psa. 29 on the planting of the cedars of Lebanon in the house of the Lord. At the conclusion of the service on the monday following Mr. C[ardale] blessed the people in the power of the Spirit, as Mr. D[rummond] had done two days before, the first buddings, although we knew it not, of the coming apostleship; and a few days afterward, while Mr. C[ardale] was in prayer, asking God for the outpouring of His Spirit upon the church, declaring that the Lord had called him to be an apostle, and to convey His holy unction. The next morning Mr. Irving, narrating the dealings of the Lord in the designation of Mr. C[ardale], solemnly addressed him accordingly, adjuring him to be faithful and warning him of the exceeding great responsibility and awfulness of his office: also warning us against any idolatry or undue exaltation of a man, inasmuch as the whole church was apostolic, and instead of needing to lean on any man, was itself 'the pillar and ground of the truth'“ (Restoration, &c., pp. 64-66).

Mr. Cardale, though thus designated apostle, did not act plenarily for the present. Mr. Drummond was by a prophet named pastor or angel of the church at Albany on the 20th of October, the day after Mr. C. was named apostle. For Christmas Messrs. Cardale and Taplin went to Albnry, where on the eve Mr. C. ordained Mr. Place as evangelist. Yet were they perplexed how to celebrate the Eucharist. Mr. R. Story of Rosneath wrote a letter at the time, given in Appendix iv. (pp. 409-411) to his Life, which lets us see the state of things—

“At the commencement of the usual meeting for prayer on Wednesday evening last (26th current), the Lord spoke a searching word through Mr. Caird while Mr. Drummond was reading the thirty-third Psalm; the substance of it was a warning against trifling with God and with sin. Before

singing Mr. D[rummond] warned the people against coming there without knowing why. He saw some who, he feared, were ignorant that the purpose of this meeting was to pray unto the Lord for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and the revival of all His gifts to the whole church everywhere throughout the world; and unless they could join sincerely in this, the prayer would be a wavering prayer, which the Lord would not hear. After the Psalm Mr. D[rummond] said there were some amongst them who, he knew, were very anxious concerning the ordinance of the Lord's Supper; and he requested the brethren who might be led to pray to make this an object of special prayer: he then called upon the elder, Mr. Bayford, to read and pray. Mr. B[ayford] read Luke 4. During the prayer, while beseeching the Lord to make known His mind regarding ordinances, the Spirit broke forth in Mr. Drummond, saying, ‘It is the Lord's will; it is His will that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper be observed in this church; it is His will.'

Then the Spirit through Mr. Caird called on us to rejoice that the Lord had heard the prayers of the destitute, and said, ‘Be ye prepared to keep the feast with desire; desire ye to do this in remembrance of Jesus; the Lord will feed the hungry, but the rich He shall send empty away.' Mr. Hayford concluded his prayer, and Mr. D[rummond] desired the church to sing the thirty-sixth paraphrase, which contains the words last quoted by the Spirit. While preparing to sing it, the Lord spoke through Mr. Taplin a long time in a tongue, and then said, The Lord ordains by you, who have been called to be the angel of this church, to feed this people with the body and with the blood of the Lord: the meek ones shall be fed, but the proud consumed.' Mr. D[rummond] then called on the church for thanksgiving to the Lord for the mercy He had shown, but told them to remember we still required the counsel of the Lord in this matter, and added, ‘I may give you the bread and the wine, and you may press the bread with carnal teeth and touch the wine with your lips, but this is not to have communion with the Lord. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing '; and again he called to prayer. The Spirit immediately spoke through Mr. Caird, saying, 'Let the Lord do His work; let Him declare all His mind; let His working alone be seen in the midst of you.'

The Spirit then through Mr. Cardale began to open up the mystery of the Body and Blood, and the proper condition of those who receive it, and with much expression of grief, saying, ‘Mourn ye, because the cisterns are broken, and there is no water. The Lord's people are a grief to Him; they are a burden to Him. He is pressed, He is pressed under them. There are some among you who believe not. Jesus is angry, He is angry.' The Spirit then proceeded in prayer crying unto the Lord, ‘O come down unto Thy people; O for a living way to ascend unto our God,' concluding with a comprehensive prayer for the whole church and for the officers of the church in particular, specifying everyone, pastor, evangelist, elder, and prophet. At the close of the prayer Mr. D[rummond] again said, 'I wish some of the brethren would pray, for I do not clearly discern the mind of the Lord in this matter.' The Spirit in Mr. Cardale said, ‘Ye do well,' and continued to plead and exhort; it was a mingled utterance of both. Then the Spirit broke forth in Mr. Taplin with great power in a tongue, and thus said, ‘The Lord commandeth you, you who have been called to be an apostle, to lay hands, on the angel of this church, and ordain him to rule and feed the church, to feed them with the body and blood of the Lord: be faithful, be faithful, and Jesus will honor you.' After a short pause Mr. Cardale advanced to Mr. Drummond, who was kneeling at the desk, and after a prayer mighty in the Spirit, beginning at Creation and going through the manifestations of God unto the person, sufferings, and glory of the Lord Jesus, with strong crying for faith and that

the hand of the Lord alone might be seen, put forth his hands on Mr. Drummond's head, the latter seeming deeply absorbed in communion with God; the Spirit in Mr. Cardale saying, Be thou filled with the Holy Ghost, and with the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge and of a sound mind. Be thou of a quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. Feed and rule His people. Be thou faithful unto death, and thou shalt receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath prepared for thee and all who love the Lord Jesus.' Then turning to Mr. Bayford he blessed him, and spake words of encouragement, exhorting him to feed this people, and in so doing he himself should be fed. Immediately after this the Spirit burst forth in Mr. Drummond in a song, ‘Glory to God in the highest,' when the Spirit in Mr. Caird took up the same strain in the name of the church, singing the Doxology in which the congregation joined. Then followed a remarkable prayer in the Spirit by Mr. Drummond thanking and praising the Father for all His goodness and mercy; for His gentle dealing with us, not remembering our unworthiness, but putting away our sins, beseeching the Lord with great urgency not to let the vessels be looked to or regarded in themselves, lest He should be provoked to dash them in pieces. He seemed to have great entrance into the bosom of Jesus, enjoying much light shown in the rapidity of the utterance. Mr. Cardale then in a commanding manner spoke in the Spirit, saying, 'It is the Lord's will that thou proceed to feed this people with the body and blood of the Lord. See thou to it; live for them; watch for them by night and by day, and see that thou give a good account of the souls committed to thy trust. The Lord will bless thee in it. The Lord hath ordained thee the pastor of this people. He hath cast off the pastors who have forsaken and fouled the waters; but now He hath appointed them one who will give them pure water.' Then a word to Mr. Bayford, charging him to be faithful in teaching this people, and promising him ordination in the Lord's time. Mr. Drummond was then looking for a psalm to sing, when the Spirit, through Mr. Cardale, said, Sing the twenty-fourth Psalm, and let all your hearts be lifted up to the Lord.' The Spirit in Mr. Taplin then, after singing for a while in a tongue, declared that Jesus had been in the midst of us, that His arms were open to receive us, that we should flee into them. Mr. Drummond then again in prayer blessed the Lord, praying for the souls of the pastors, although their offices were being laid aside; and, after a few words of exhortation to his people, showing that the utterances of the Spirit were no decrees, but addressed unto faith, and that according to the faith would the blessing be imparted and received, concluded by giving his blessing to the congregation.”

This long extract of a quite reliable witness gives us a life-like view of the development at work. The pseudo-prophet Taplin, rebuked in the power by Miss E. Cardale at Regent Sq., convicted by the same at Gray's Inn Road of corrupting his utterances, and assailed in the most solemn way for his misguidance in Newman Street, was the same person who designated Mr. Cardale as apostle, and Mr. Drummond as angel of the Albury church. Every one may see how the so-called prophet and apostle played into the hands of each other, guided by a spiritual power which sustained them in high pretensions without an atom of God's word but profanely abusing Christ's name. Nor can any sober Christian read the narrative without a shudder at the levity which could accept all and every part of these utterances as “in the Spirit,” bearing in mind how solemn a thing it is to grieve Him, if it be not blasphemy to accredit Him habitually with error.

When Mr. Irving after his deprivation by the Presbytery of Annan. on the 13th of March, 1833, returned to Newman Street, he was stopped by Mr. Cardale on Sunday the 31st when about to receive a child that had been privately baptized, and thereon closed the service, throwing his gown

away, with the words, “Thank God, I am free from the trammels of men.” Alas! a baser bondage ensued, according to a “prophecy” uttered in his absence. Irving fell under the iron yoke, confining himself to preaching till his fresh ordination, as he was commanded; so we learn from his own letter to D. Dow and [Douglas'] Chronicle, p. 10. Here again, Mr. Taplin, who conducted the service, figured as before, and during his utterance in the power directed the apostle to ordain Irving as angel of the church on the morrow evening. On that evening (5th April), after words and deeds of no small assumption, he called on Mr. Irving to kneel and the apostle to ordain him; when Mr. C. in the power directed 1 Sam. 2; 3, to be read, which he applied, on the one hand to corruption of the priesthood in Christendom, and on the other to God's present raising up of the apostleship and other ministries. Next, he knelt down with Mr. I., and rising laid his hands on the latter, and ordained him angel, or bishop. Then Mr. C. sent the deacons for unleavened bread, which they prepared themselves, and daring their absence read in the power Rev. 2; 3, as that which the Lord would have read. When the deacons returned with the unleavened cake and wine, he, on receiving the angel's promise to keep the charges of Christ to His church, consecrated the elements, presenting them before the Lord, and administered them to Mr. I. kneeling, who was bidden to administer them to his elders, and the congregation, the service of not far from four hours concluding with a Psalm, the doxology, and the benediction (Restoration of Apostles, &c., pp. 108-110).

Elders had been already nominated. On the evening after Irving's consecration as angel (equivalent in their scheme to an Episcopalian diocesan or bishop) a sixth elder was appointed, making up the complement represented by the golden candlestick with its three branches on either side of its central shaft, as had been taught in power. Soon after two evangelists were called by the prophet, and ordained by Cardale with Irving, inasmuch as they were to serve under the oversight of the latter. On the Lord's day following the six elders were ordained according to promise, Cardale taking the upper hand most decidedly, with Irving accompanying, as in the ordination of the evangelists.

Even this official show did not suffice. Five were designated by prophecy as assistant elders or “helps” (as was a sixth later), and ordained by the apostle with the angel, not without Cardale's holding out to some a higher honor to come. On the Sunday after seven deacons were appointed to the charge of temporals, i.e., the public services and the poor, subordinately to the presbyters or priests (for of course they are confounded). Singular to say, the apostle did not lay hands on them, in marked contrast with scripture (Acts 6:6). Can we suppose them ignorant of the fact? or did Mr. C. presume to improve on the Twelve? They were however not only chosen by the congregation but ordained by the hands of the angel and of his elders, and brought before “the apostle” for his blessing. One was named head deacon, the only deacon who followed I. from Regent Square, as three of the six elders did also. The strangest perhaps of these ordinations was that of Taplin, the first thus of the prophets: a thing wholly unknown to scripture.

Newman Street (the premises of the late Mr. West, the painter) was to be a model for other churches, though the official display might be greater or less according to the congregation.

Bishopgate was the second, where a Mr. Miller had presided over an independent meeting, but imbibed subsequently Mr. Irving's views. As early as the 12th of June prophetic utterance broke out publicly for eleven months, till it forbade Mr. Miller to administer the Eucharist, and he was in

due time ordered to seek instructions at Newman Street. The very next evening Miller was ordained by Cardale as angel of the Bishopgate church, with an elder also. On the 19th December of the same year an angel was ordained of the congregation in Brighton.

Meanwhile greater things were essayed. For Mr. Drummond was ordained apostle nearly two months before (23 Sept. 1833), already consecrated angel of the church at Albury. For a while both Cardale and Drummond only acted apostolically in the power (Restoration, &c., p. 126), two other apostles being added, Messrs. King, or King-Church, and Perceval. But early in 1834 they were directed to act thenceforward in virtue of their office without control from within or without. In the same year (2 Jan.) a church began at Chatham with its angel. Later in January, the minister of Park Chapel, Mr. H. J. Owen, left the Anglican body. He was consecrated angel of the church in Chelsea, as another clergyman, Mr. Horne, at Southwark.

After Irving's visit to Edinburgh early in 1834, Messrs. Cardale and Drummond went to the same city, and ordained Mr. Tait angel there. Mr. D. returned soon, but Mr. C., with a prophet and evangelist, visited Glasgow, &c., ordaining on his way. Daring his absence Taplin in the power repeatedly called for “the pitching of the Lord's tabernacle,” the 60 pillars of which he made out to be as many evangelists, when of about 200 candidates, 60 were chosen evangelists, with as many coadjutors, 30 being seated in one gallery, and 30 in another the next Lord's day; and Mr. Irving, who had looked for much greater power in the “baptism of fire,” preached such a discourse as one might expect from such a man wholly ender the system. But lo! a letter from Cardale followed, swiftly denouncing the whole as a delusion, with a rebuke to the angel and the prophet. To this Irving bowed: not so Taplin, who left Newman St. for a while. The prophetesses too became troublesome, though at first in the front rank of honor, till the apostolic command relieved all from obedience to any word coming through the handmaids. Thenceforward apostles must reign as kings.

The Catholic Apostolic Body or Irvingites: 9. Development

CHAPTER II. DEVELOPMENT.

Those who did not fear to assume the apostolic place, before many months elapsed after Mr. Irving's death, were (besides Messrs. Cardale, Drummond) Messrs King-Church, Perceval, Armstrong and Wood house, called before his death, and after it Messrs. Sitwell, Tudor, Dalton, Carlyle, W. Dow, and D. Dow.

But even then a striking hitch occurred. D. Dow, the respected Scotch minister, it will be remembered, who supported Mr. Irving when deposed by the Presbytery of Annan, and this “in the power,” was designated apostle, but refused the call. The time had been longingly expected according to Mr. Baxter's interpretation of Rev. 11 “The ever memorable” 14th July, 1835 was to be preceded by a week of waiting on the Lord, “Who at the end of that time would perform His promise.” All the angels of churches were summoned as well as the twelve. But Mr. D. Dow, though he came to London, declined, notwithstanding the most earnest appeals. Dr. Norton (Restoration, p. 132) tries to escape the difficulty by pleading the Lord's choice of a traitor among His Twelve. But surely this is lame. The weightiest events turned on Judas' part according to prophecy, which was fulfilled to the letter. The call of Mr. David Dow “in the power” was falsified, and nothing resulted, it seems, more than the proved collapse of the new apostolate from the start. Nevertheless the intrepid men who led the rest were not to be daunted, and on the morning of the 14th proceeded to number Mr. Mackenzie in the vacant place, from two who were put forward, the less favored candidate being shortly after appointed to an office only second to that of apostle. Can the reader conjecture what? To be “chief of the pastors”! So readily did the system lend itself to unauthorized posts of honor, of which God's word knows nothing. In this atmosphere of vanity they lived; for they had their senior apostle (Cardale), their senior pastor (Thompson), their senior prophet (Taplin), and their senior evangelist (Place), named in the word of prophecy (!) “the four pillars.” On the evening of that day the seven angels of London (Messrs. Heath, Miller, Owen, Horne, Seton, Leighton and Wallace) formally separated the Irvingite twelve as apostles in the order of the seniority of their call; and the other angels present stood up as participants in the act.

At Albury, in company with the “prophets” and others, the “apostles” were ordered to give themselves up to the reading of the scriptures with prayer for twelve months. Even then there were some twenty-four churches in Great Britain and Ireland. It is doubtful whether more really exist now, for many are merely nominal. And the number of communicants is small with few exceptions; especially when we bear in mind that they count them from babes over two years old! In the apostles' chapel at Albury, outside Mr. D.'s grounds, there are twenty-four stalls, of which the Irvingite Apostolate occupied twelve. What was the meaning of the other dozen? Has the Union Review (71:41, note) ground for saying that they were reserved for the Twelve at our Lord's return? It is as hard to doubt that such must be the superstition as to believe that Christian men should be so profane. There is in the council-chamber of this chapel a table of twelve sides made expressly for apostolic deliberation, with space in the center for secretaries or “scribes,” and round

the room are scats for the prophets and others who might attend. Unanimity was insisted on. Their twelvefold unity was the boast.

Only in July 1835 at Albury do we hear of weekly communion; before this it was but once a month. And all was simple as yet, if one except the use of unleavened bread, as Mr. Miller lets us know. This in a small way indicated that Judaizing which was about to break all bounds ere long; for what they called “the mystery of the tabernacle” soon appeared, if it was not the mere development of Taplin's prophecy rebuked before Irving's death. The new form had Cardale's sanction: then all went smoothly. Without dwelling on their minute applications, it is enough to say that the sixty pillars were supposed to represent sixty evangelists, with whom they also compared Cant. 3:7, 8, under five angel-evangelists answering to the five pillars at the entrance. This furnished fresh fuel for that burning love of office which characterizes the body and is well illustrated here. Of these five it is a sorrowful reflection that “the center” was a Mr. Douglas, once known in happier circumstances, succeeded by Sir G. Hewett. Again the forty-eight boards were thought to represent the forty-two elders of the Seven Churches (London), headed by the six junior apostles who answered to the six boards at the farther end of the tabernacle. The five apostles next to the six corresponded to the five bars which upheld the boards. As if this did not suffice, the four pillars between the holy place and the holiest were interpreted as the four seniors of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors, the pillars of each! The angels of course found their counterpart in the seven lamps of the golden candlesticks, and two elders who acted as scribes had a figure in the two corner-boards.

These functionaries and others, notably the prophets, of whom at first were seven (Taplin, Drummond, Cardale, Bayford, Lady II. Drummond, Miss E. Cardale, and Mrs. Cardale), afterward twelve, formed the council of Zion, ordered to meet on the fourth Tuesday in each month. The order of procedure was most formal. Liberty was unknown. The five apostles next to the senior stated the principles by which the decision was to be drawn; then the five chief evangelists opened the case in the light of those principles; the elders next gave their counsel; and the seven angels summed up. There was a pause for a word of prophecy if any. Finally the apostles delivered judgment through the senior, either on the spot, or after private investigation, or at a future date; of which judgment, formally recorded by the scribes, a copy was given to “the four pillars” for communication to their respective ministries. Where the case pertained to the evangelists, the sixty of London advised; and the substance was summed up by the five angel-evangelists who presented it to the council.

As yet however all was confined to the narrow limits of Great Britain. This could not content souls ever so little awakened to see what the church is. And a more ambitious ecclesiastical system never was broached than Irvingism in 1835-6. The Council of Zion made them aspire after a Council of Jerusalem to consist of one hundred and forty-four angels from all Christendom. “In every land His purpose should be effected upon the same principle, and in accordance with that pattern” (D.'s Chronicle, p. 24). So far from realizing this ecumenical expansion, they gradually dropt even the council of Zion, only to revive with less pretension and a change of name. The grand council proved but a dream. The council of the tribe of Judah alone remained.

The fact is that to deduce the mystery of the church from the Jewish tabernacle and especially from prophecy, though the error of others great and small besides the C. A. body, is not only

unwarranted by, but opposed to, direct scripture. Rom. 16:25, 26 lets us know that the mystery had been kept in silence in times of the ages, but now had been manifested, and by prophetic scriptures, according to commandment of the eternal God, made known for obedience of faith to all the nations. “Prophetic scriptures” mean, not the prophetic books of old, but writings of the apostles and prophets who constitute the foundation on which the church is built (Eph. 2). Silence had been kept of old. Now the mystery had been made manifest; which in other generations, as says the apostle (Eph. 3:5), was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit. Clearly this means exclusively the N. T. apostles and prophets, not the prophets of the O. T. and the apostles of the N. T., an unintelligent and perverse misinterpretation, as any Christian ought to see the more by comparison with the chapters before and after. Now this explodes the entire basis on which the Irvingite apostles reared their Jewish imitations. The mystery was never before revealed.

As with other spurious outgrowths of Christendom, the Incarnation, blessed and essential a truth as it is, had superseded the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Savior. This error substitutes the Word made flesh for accomplished redemption, and leaves man still under law, waiting for that atoning work which alone glorifies God as to sin and gives peace to the awakened conscience, with Satan and the world forever overcome. Short of the cross carnal ordinances were unremoved and prevailed, which could not make the worshipper perfect as touching the conscience. Christ's one offering has changed all; and the worshippers once purged have no more conscience of sins. The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For there is a disannulling of a commandment going before because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in of a better hope by which we draw nigh to God (Heb. 7), yea, into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10). Judaism is wholly gone, not by Christ's birth, which had rather been its crown if the Jews had received Him, but by His death, the grave of all its hopes and pride and religion, but the basis of Christianity, and of the church His body united to Him on high by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.

To this agrees all Scripture that treats definitely of our proper privileges. See Eph. 2:13-22, 3., 4: 416, v. 25-27. So in Col. 1 Christ's headship of the church is bound up with His being the first-born from the dead, in distinction from His being firstborn of all creation; and us He has reconciled in the body of His flesh, not when incarnate, but “through death” by which alone our sins were judged before God and borne in His body on the tree. Hence baptism figures, not association with a living Christ, but burial with Him, so that, when we were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of our flesh, we were quickened with Him, having all our trespasses forgiven. This alone is Christianity, being founded on Christ's death and resurrection. Putting the Incarnation as the proper basis and ground leaves God not yet glorified as to evil, man still (even believing man) undelivered, and the enemy in power. The Catholic systems of Christendom are all guilty of like fatal retrocession from the truth symbolized by their own forms and institutions; but the most exaggerated departure of all seems embodied in Irvingism, whatever of truth, and there is much, may be attested by it otherwise.

Here it may be of interest to note the excessive Judaizing that appears in the mission and jurisdiction assigned to the new apostles through a prophecy of Mr. Drummond in June, 1836, corresponding in a fanciful way with the twelve tribes of Rev. 7. As England was to be Judah, the chief tribe (the exercise and submission to reasonable rule), so it was confided to Mr. Cardale,

“pillar of the apostles.” Scotland, being small, had Switzerland annexed, as mountainous lands, stood for Benjamin (dignified patriotism, though in small nations inhabiting small countries), and was assigned to Mr. Drummond. Denmark, Holland and Belgium (contented industry) answered to Issachar and fell to Mr. King-Church. Italy was Manasseh (civil virtues and faithful citizenship), Mr. Perceval's lot. Mr. Armstrong had Ireland and Greece (capacity for intellectual and bodily enjoyment) as Zebulun. Mr. Woodhouse had Austria (the historical head of Germany) and South Germany (intense desire for a united fatherland) as Reuben. Spain and Portugal (chivalrous adherence to an adopted purpose, and is heartened by practical difficulties), or Naphtali, had Mr. Sitwell. Poland with India subsequently, as symbolized by Ephraim (though confessedly it was not easy to trace a resemblance), was for Mr. Tudor. Mr. Dalton had France, as Asher (a yearning after fraternity), while Prussia and N. Germany were for Mr. Carlyle as Simeon (quiet perseverance in accomplishing what is aimed at). Russia or Dan (persistent expectation of the decrees of providence) became Mr. W. Dow's portion; and Mr. Mackenzie was allotted Norway and Sweden as Gad (honesty and passive courage in adhering to what they are, uninfluenced by the opinions of others). America does not appear in this division; but the U. S. at last fell to Mr. Cardale, though Mr. Woodhouse acted there for him.

We may add that the twelve stones on the high priest's breastplate, as well as the encampment, were connected with the tribes thus—the sardins, emerald, and topaz representing England or Judah, Ireland and Greece or Zebulun, and Denmark, &c., or Issachar; the carbuncle, sapphire, and diamond, Austria or Reuben, Prussia or Simeon, Norway, &c., or Gad; the ligure, agate and amethyst, Poland or Ephraim, Italy or Manasseh, Scotland, &c., or Benjamin; the beryl, onyx, and jasper, Russia or Dan, France or Asher, and Spain, &c., or Naphtali. It is enough to state this imaginative scheme. Basis in truth it has none; but there may be a better opportunity to say more when we examine the doctrines of this strange system.

Chapter 42

The Catholic Apostolic Body or Irvingites: 10. Development

The time now came for the modern apostles to be put to the test. They had not only studied and conferred together in the pleasant retreat of Albury, but had elaborated “the Great Testimony” to the patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, and others in places of chief rule over the church of Christ throughout the earth, and to the emperors, kings, sovereign princes, and chief governors over the nations of the baptized. This pretentious document forms an Appendix of not less than ninety closely-printed pages at the end of Mr. Miller's vol. i., to which the reader is referred who desires to consider frilly what the entire college of these apostles, supplemented by such aid as they called in, had to say to those addressed. A smaller testimony, for which Mr. Perceval was responsible, had been delivered by him and Mr. Drummond to King William IV. and the Privy Councilors in 1836, as was another under Mr. Cardale's charge delivered to the Anglican hierarchy and many of the clergy, two apostles waiting on the Archbishop of Canterbury and several bishops. These may be examined though not quite in extenso in an Appendix to Mr. M.'s vol. ii.

Furnished with the larger instrument, and each of them choosing as his subordinate companions a prophet, an evangelist, and a pastor, to act as heads each over his own province of ministry, the apostles went forth early in 1838, with the injunction to return before the year ran out. Mr. Cardale, as the senior to whom England was assigned, staid at home, as apparently Mr. Tudor also for aright that appears of any visit to Poland or India then recorded. As Scotland and Ireland were at hand, Messrs Drummond and Armstrong were within easy call.

According to the “Narrative” (of authority within the society) three tasks were imposed on each corps of missionaries lst, to spy out the land; 2nd, to dig for gold; and 3rd, to seek gates of entrance. A vivid contrast with the true apostles! Not so did Peter visit all parts of the land, or open the kingdom of heaven to the Gentiles. Not so did Paul and Barnabas fulfill the work for which they were called and separated by the Holy Spirit. They knew that wherever they went, it was the valley of deep darkness, but that they carried the true light, yea were seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life. They had the treasure in earthen vessels, which they sought to communicate, instead of digging for gold; and they looked to the Lord for an opened door. Nor was it in vain; for they were blessed in every way, quite as much in their sufferings, as in what men call sacrifices. Why the modern apostles and their helps were admonished to be “as learners and observers rather than teachers” is passing strange. If it is pleaded that it was now a question of Christendom, rather than of Jews and Gentiles as of old, can we forget to what their own party had long borne witness? That Christendom consists, said they, of the various streets of Babylon fore-doomed of God, and, more loudly than anything ever did, demanding the cry, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities. Babylon, the great confusion and corruption of the truth, and a persecutor more cruel than Jew or heathen, seems at this time to have risen into no small honor in Irvingite eyes.

To the initiated three dignitaries in particular became the object of the “Great Testimony “: the Pope; the Emperor (i.e., of Austria), the then supposed heir of the western power; and the King of the French, as the real continental representative at that epoch of constitutional monarchy. So the “Narrative” informs us. But the modern apostles found others to be no less adepts in ceremony than themselves, and had to content themselves with placing their document in intermediate hands. Some kings and bishops it did reach, perhaps all who were aimed at. Whether in that visit or since, they soon learned that Romanist countries are uncongenial soil, and where the Greek church prevails, little better. Lutherans and Reformed were more open to their appeal.

It is certain that these envoys carried themselves everywhere as inoffensive gentlemen. They may have been more abundant in labors than their records imply; but of prison, stripes, deaths, none can speak, nor of any approach to such distresses for Christ's sake. Perils of all kinds they studiously and prudently avoided. They knew nothing, as far as one has heard, of toil and travails, of watchings, of hunger and thirst, of cold and nakedness. One apostle of old, ashamed to tell us of himself, was compelled nevertheless through the wrong of others to say how he labored and suffered, aye, immeasurably more than these all together. This seems peculiar, if they were veritable apostles (weigh 1 Cor. 4:9-13).

The effect of their mission appears to have been disastrous to themselves. Their Judaizing tendency, already marked, received immense impulse and material from their spying out the lands; they brought home “gold” as they thought, for circulation. It was really what God's word denounces as the basest of beggarly elements (Gal. 4). On their return the development of Ritual and Liturgy became their passion. In this of course the Eucharist and its offering took up the central place, and, one might say, idolatrous honor.

But dissensions at home hurried them back, though it was agreed at length to meet not earlier than June, 1840. It was owing to the preponderance of “the prophets” in the absence of “the apostles,” who harped on the fourfold ministry (Eph. 4) to the danger, as Mr. Cardale and his fellows thought, of the supreme place due to the apostolate. It was contended, on the one hand, that the council, where all could act in their measure together, ought to govern as the last resort. For the apostles, on the one hand, to be reduced to an executive was resented, as not only derogatory, but suicidal. The absent envoys were therefore recalled to stem the adverse current; especially as “the angels” (or bishops of the party) sympathized with “the prophets” in their jealousy of “the apostles.” It seems likely that the lack of apostolic signs, and of the expected “baptism of fire,” as well as comparative failure abroad, may have strengthened the revolt.

The assembled twelve at once sought to hear all grievances, as well as every opposing view about the ministry, themselves included. After mature consideration they set forth their unanimous judgment that the new proposals were incompatible with divine order, and could issue only in that disunion and ruin which had overspread the church, till the modern twelve were restored according to prophecy. Their apostolic position was not of their seeking, but owned by all as immediately of the Lord, however much they realized their own insufficiency. Diotrephes' censure stood a warning to all opposers of an apostle. They should therefore go on as they had began, and on no other ground would they bear the burden of the churches. This decision they delivered in August, and in September closed the council of Zion which had continued to be held monthly hitherto. In 1847 the council of the tribe of Judah began for the seven churches, as it goes on still month by month;

there was also a meeting for their and other angels under the apostle. It appears, if Mr. Miller be rightly informed, that they look for the next council of Zion, as for the universal church, after the Lord's advent: a most irreverent idea of theirs.

But a serious, not to say deadly, blow was given to the prophets; for it was now laid down, more emphatically at least than before, that the state of the prophet modified materially his utterances: error as well as uncleanness might be there; so that the prophet fell under the general rule, and the decision lay with the apostles. How differently speaks God's word in Deut. 18: 22.

Thus the twelve prevailed; yet the twelfth could not go with the rest. Mr. Mackenzie, though bowing to the measures, withdrew from active personal responsibility. (“Narrative,” p. 83.) All efforts failed to induce him to act the apostle without the power, which he failed to see in any. He doubted them till “they had received a second Pentecostal endowment of power in supernatural manifestations.” Here again, as in Mr. D. Dow's case, was a deep wound in the twelve-fold unity, their articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae. But their eyes were sealed. They were for the most part so committed to their notions, as the voice of God, that most refused the warning. Visits of the churches followed, and general acquiescence with answers of unchanged confidence. Satan does not let off the truth so easily. Yet not a few escaped, and many more stood aloof.

The Catholic Apostolic Body or Irvingites: 11. Closing Sketch of the History

CHAPTER 3. CLOSING SKETCH OF THE HISTORY.

This peculiarity belongs to those who here occupy our attention, that the failure of their expectations, which to others may be but a trial and bring correction of haste, is to the Irvingites fatal. The reason is as evident as it is unanswerable. Their edifice rests, first, on the genuine character of their prophets, who committed themselves, with all the leaders as well as the led, to their utterances as of God; secondly, and even more distinctly, on the twelvefold unity of their apostolate, as raised up to prepare the bride for the returning of the Bridegroom. For they have ever avowed, before and since as well as in their Great Testimony, that “apostles, and apostles alone, are in Scripture declared to be the center of authority, of doctrine, of unity in all things, to the visible church of Christ on earth, until His second and glorious appearing to those that look for Him without sin onto salvation.'“ Hence, in flagrant contradiction of scripture, they claim for the apostles what they never claimed for themselves at the beginning who were the foundation on which the church was built. Never did they restrict to themselves the call to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them; never did they assume that the Lord gave this mission, not only to them alone directly and immediately, but to none other except through them. Consequently never in the N. T. do we hear in a single instance of ordaining the evangelist to that work, or of preachers receiving their mission from apostles. Very different in position, they are alike the gifts direct of the ascended Head. Irvingism is here a false witness.

They admit nominally the rain of the church. “As truly as the angels left their first estate, as certainly as the nations before the flood apostatized and quenched the light given unto them from God through Adam, as surely as the Jews who crucified the Lord rejected the counsel of God against themselves, so truly the baptized have fallen from the glorious standing wherein God placed the church at the beginning.” Yet instead of repenting in sackcloth and ashes, and inquiring of God what His word directs as befitting those who desire to do His will, they arrogate to themselves to restore all as at the beginning—an expectation contrary to every analogy in the past, and without any word to warrant it in the N. T. scriptures, not to say wholly opposed to all just inference, and inconsistent with the provision of grace for failure.

The Reformation never so presumed. Indeed the men whom God then used and blessed knew little of God's church, being pre-occupied in getting rid of the Papal imposture and its more glaring departures from the truth. An open Bible they did recover and vindicate, though not without an undue reliance on the civil power, which thenceforward crippled the Protestant bodies. Non-conformity again sought and sometimes fought for relief of conscience and a liberty which did not fail to degenerate into self-will; it never rose to the assertion of Christ's rights acting by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; as the church became less and less known in these conflicts. There was no due sense of ruin. They endeavored to do the best they could in their various societies. Their ministers were Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregational, as the case might be. They

pretended not to the apostolate.

Irvingism confessed in word the church's ruin as they did not; and yet pretended to divinely given apostles with so much the graver guilt. For if there was one feature more essentially distinctive of the primitive church, it was those who constitute the foundation. Yet they knowing this, confessing present ruin, and avowing faith in a constantly to be expected Lord, claim a fall apostolate once more, as if a foundation could be the pinnacle as well as the basis of that building, the church. If this claim be a monstrous error, morally as well as doctrinally, even an Irvingite must own that no claim of theirs is so distinctive. But the apostle Paul, predicting the ruin at hand, never casts the faithful on apostolic succession, still less on restoring the ministry of apostles to the church. This is not the least lie of the enemy that distinguishes the body, which therefore calls itself Catholic Apostolic. Their own effort to set up the church again is a new and more monstrous form of evil than that of any serious Christians, and all the more blind and obnoxious to judgment because they professed to see the ruin which Romanists denied, and Protestants saw not. It may be true that the cessation of the apostleship, and the rain of the church, too sadly coincided; but, without warrant of scripture, for those involved in the ruin to look for apostles and accept twelve men in that capacity, as a remedy for evil and restoration of broken unity, is to fall into presumptuous sin, instead of humbling ourselves for our sins and those of the church at large.

But, even on their own showing, their anticipations have been proved false. Take the Narrative, by the N. German apostle's “permission,” where three anointings of the apostles were to answer to David's. Whatever may be pretended as to the first and second, the third has confessedly failed altogether; when it was fondly hoped that the apostles would “receive a power and extent of jurisdiction which they did not then possess.” Can the most sanguine say that this day has ever come? Why then do they not take and humble themselves in the dust?

Further, on the face of the facts, the apostolate for the end, which was to usher in the Lord's Appearing, has waxed old and is ready to vanish away. Does this consist with the voices of the accredited prophets and the universal faith of Irvingites? Candor will not dispute the clear inconsistency. For these twelve to die is fatal to all their testimony. Yet they are all deceased save one. Mr. R. Woodhouse, now an aged man, still lives at Albury, and appears occasionally at Gordon Square. Mr. Mackenzie, the last, who withdrew in 1840, was the first of the apostles to die; Mr. Carlyle followed; and Mr. W. Dow, all in 1855. Messrs. Perceval and Drummond died in 1859. Great things were looked for in 1856, and yet more in 1866, when apparently the prophets of error sought to cover over these unexpected deaths by the deceit of carrying on the sealing in the unseen world, which had so conspicuously failed in this world. This fable seems to be accepted, not only by Dr. Norton (pp. 183, 4), but on the testimony of one of these apostles who died expressing his full assurance that God had further work for him to do! in flat contradiction of the apostle's word in Phil. 1:22-25. Besides, as sealing was avowedly to exempt from the great tribulation on this habitable earth, how could it apply to persons defunct? The alleged object is gone. Up to this time Mr. Dalton, one of the Twelve, still stuck to his position as an Anglican presbyter, and in fact not till 1860 gave himself up to apostolic work. Mr. Tudor died in 1862, Mr. Sitwell in 1865, and Mr. King-Church after him. Mr. Dalton died in 1871, Mr. Armstrong, then paralyzed, lived some time longer. Mr. Cardale, who had ever been the energetic leader of the Twelve, remained till 1878. The idea of coadjutor apostles, overruled when Mr. Taplin first presented it, seems to have since prevailed: whether it is still in contemplation to add largely in this

form, which is not unlike succession, is not certain. But Mr. Miller informs us that the prophetic utterances latterly, instead of addressing the Twelve as of old, have been saying, “O ye Twelve and O ye seventy.” But whatever this may indicate of the dissolving system, it is very certain that the Seventy of Luke 10 were in no way coadjutor apostles. The idea is a fiction, as opposed to their universal expectations founded on utterances in power, as it is fundamentally subversive of their ecclesiastical principle and scheme.

Chapter 44

The Catholic Apostolic Body or Irvingites: 12. Closing Sketch of the History

CHAPTER III. CONCLUSION OF HISTORY.

In this closing sketch it is proposed to test briefly the value of their anticipations grounded on their interpretation of Rev. 7; 14, which plays so prominent a part in their thoughts, words, and acts. In 1847, as may be remembered by our readers, their apostles began the imposition of hands on all members above twenty years of age, in accordance, as they pleaded, with Ex. 30! As Dr. Norton explains, “not that any are kept back from the table of the Lord till then; for even young children are admitted to it on all great festivals; and all their youth become regular monthly, and then weekly, communicants, after they have duly received the instruction of the pastor, and the blessing of the angels, which is their Episcopal confirmation; the laying on of apostolic hands being the further and higher consecration of them, as His sealed ones and first fruits, if they fall not through sin and unbelief from this their high estate” (Restoration, p. 175).

Their words seem disingenuous as to sealing before and outside Irvingism. They naturally shrink from the logical result of their position. “We do not pause now to consider when, and in what way, those receive ‘the seal of the living God,' who have lived and died in the absence of apostles, but who nevertheless for their pre-eminent faithfulness have obtained a place among the firstfruits; nor what will be the final accomplishment of the apocalyptic vision of the sealed after the appearing of the Lord; but regarding the prophecy in its historical aspect, we would remark that ten of the twelve tribes of the spiritual Israel have been sealed already; and that ‘Joseph is now being sealed,' who obtains the birthright and blessing which Reuben, signifying the first century of Christianity, failed to secure. And none can tell how quickly that phase of the church may terminate; and none others be sealed except as Benjamin the son of sorrow, born as his mother dies” (Restoration, pp. 175, 176).

It would have been wiser, every thoughtful soul must feel, if the Irvingites had “paused to consider” what they slur over. For it is impossible to allow that “pre-eminent faithfulness” can either gain the seal of the Spirit or dispense with that characteristic privilege. It would follow then that no saints for more than seventeen centuries since the death of John the apostle possessed that distinctive mark of Christianity. Shrinking from an inference involving a judgment so extreme, they hint at a loophole of escape so untenable as “pre-eminent faithfulness” drawing a blessing, which they dogmatically restrict to the imposition of apostolic hands. As far as appears, they do not hope so charitably of the present generation. The sealed now at least are those only who come under the Irvingite apostles (not all these indeed, but such as were bold enough to act on the command of the second apostle speaking in the power).

The truth is that it is all ignorance of Scripture and unbelief of His grace. For it is clear from Holy Writ that on the great occasions recorded not a word is said of the apostles laying on their hands in order to the gift or sealing of the Spirit. The first was the day of Pentecost, when He was given to

those of Israel who repented and were baptized. The second, yet more striking and to us of the deepest interest, was when the Gentiles, also received the like gift in the house of Cornelius. It is certain that the Holy Ghost then sealed the Gentile faithful without the laying on of apostolic hands, though the first of the twelve was there to do that work, had it been requisite. The Scripture is conclusive. “While Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.” They were not even baptized with water, till after they were thus baptized with the Holy Spirit; and they were baptized not by the apostle but by one or more of the “six brethren” that accompanied him. The basis of Irvingism is therefore destroyed by Scripture, which proves that, on the main occasions of that immense gift—the sealing of the Spirit, imposition of hands is not named in the first and in the other could not have been as the preliminary condition. It is therefore a groundless fiction. We are shown in the inspired history that the Holy Spirit was given to the Gentiles (and such we are naturally) on the hearing of the word by faith; just as another apostle teaches it as indisputable truth (Gal. 3:2). That in the subordinate circumstances of Samaria (Acts 8) and Ephesus (Acts 19), the Spirit was given after apostles laid hands on the faithful, is true; but this cannot annul the typical ways of God with the Jews and the Gentiles who believed the gospel. They were but ancillary cases, it would seem, to counteract Samaritan independence, and to maintain the apostolate of Paul. The general principle abides untouched, thanks be to God Who provided thus indefeasibly for times and places where and when apostles could not be. The Irvingites, not seeing this great truth, have misused the peculiar cases to undermine the standing general truth, denied the special essential blessing of the church, and set up a false pretension.

Nor is this their only nor perhaps most flagrant error in the matter of sealing. It is perfectly clear that Rev. 7 speaks of a future definite act of God. You cannot legitimately embrace within the 144,000 any beyond a contemporaneous body thus favored on the earth. Now let it be put to their conscience: is it true that “ten of the twelve tribes of the (spiritual) Israel have been sealed already”? As far as can be ascertained, it is doubtful if all the sealed by the modern apostles amount to 12,000, without speaking of the many of their sealed ones who have since renounced it all as delusion! What is meant by “Joseph is now being sealed,” it is hard to understand; any more than the dreamy application of Reuben and Benjamin. It is a matter of their phraseology that Manasseh means Italy, which fell to Mr. Perceval's lot, Ephraim means Poland and India which fell to Mr. Tudor. If these constitute Joseph, he is far from being now sealed. Whether the reference to Reuben and Benjamin can refer to Mr. Woodhouse's claim over Austria, S. Germany, and America, and to Mr. Drummond's over Scotland and Switzerland, may be questioned. It looks as if Dr. Norton had forgotten their prophetic apportionment, and was employing the terms in another figurative way familiar only to initiated ears.

When the day comes for the fulfillment of Rev. 7, there will be no failure: twelve thousand (literally. or symbolically) will be sealed out of each and all the twelve tribes. But the divine object is wholly misconceived by their teaching. The 144,000 are not to be “taken away,” first or last. In the vision the angel from the sun-rising with a seal of the living God seals those servants of God on their foreheads, in contrast with the action of the four angels whose task it is to hurt the earth and the sea and the trees. Not translation to heaven, but exemption from the proposed judicial scourge is intimated: security from the woes to come. See Rev. 9:4, and compare Ezek. 9

It is allowed that “those who come out of the great tribulation form again a distinct body of witnesses” (Restoration, p. 185). And this witness is true. It is in no way a general description of

the blessed of all times, but a peculiar and countless crowd out of all the nations at the close of the age. This therefore renders it plain that the sealed out of the twelve tribes are Israelites in that day, and distinguished from Gentiles. If “spiritual Israel,” the distinction is gone: they are the same in principle. But not so: the more carefully Rev. 7 is studied as a whole, the more evident it is that the sealed of Israel's sons stand over against the innumerable throng that is gathered out of every nation. The later words of (Catholic Apostolic) prophecy, as Dr. N. shows, admit the difference. But if so, it is a state of things quite incompatible with the church, that one body wherein is neither Jew nor Gentile, both being merged with every other fleshly distinction in our union with Christ on high.

Hence, with a better understanding of the Revelation, they would have known that there is no such thing named as “churches” on earth after Rev. 3, and that from chap. iv. a new symbol is seen in heaven (the twenty-four crowned and enthroned elders, &c.), which points to the promised assemblage above, not of first-fruits only, but of those who are Christ's at His coming, His joint-heirs, before He as the slain Lamb opens the seals that indicate the process of judgment, by which He will be invested with His inheritance. When the church is gone, the faithful on earth are seen as either Israelitish or Gentile; and so we find henceforth in the Revelation.

Again, Rev. 14 is no repetition of the sealed out of the twelve tribes. It is another and yet more favored company, of Jews proper and of course converted, in special association with the Lamb on Mount Zion. They are like David's personal followers of Judah, faithful when the mass of Jews will return to idolatry and fall under anti-Christ, as our Lord warned in Matt. 12 and the prophets also declare. These are purchased from among men and out of the earth, firstfruits to God and the Lamb. They too are not caught up to heaven, but anticipate the blessed harvest of the millennial earth, a company yet more honored than the sealed Israelites of chap. 7. Neither company has to do with the church, any more than the Gentiles then saved. As to all this, the prospects of the Catholic Apostolic body are quite wrong, and have beguiled the body into fallacious hopes. They are based on indisputable misinterpretation and glaring perversion of God's word.

Chapter 45

Christian Attainment

The Christian has no goal of attainment but Christ in glory. If faithful, he does that one thing—runs to win Christ, and by any means to attain to the first resurrection. This produces the effect, so far as it operates, of walking like Christ down here. The believer's conversation (his living association) is in heaven; he looks for Christ to change his body and conform it to His glorious body. To the end therefore, we say with Paul, I count not myself to have attained; but we have no other measure of attainment. And he who best knows Christ knows best how far he is from having attained.

Chapter 46

Christianity

Christianity, while recognizing the reign of law in its own sphere, rests specifically on that which is outside and above it—the resurrection. It was morally impossible that Christ could be left under the power of death; he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God knows that He could not be holden of it. When “morally” is said, this takes it out of the category of natural sequences, God being what He is, and Christ what He was.

Chapter 47

Christ's Love

Christ loved, and, because He loved, gave Himself. In this we have proof of His Deity. God alone is self-sufficient, needing no motive other than His own nature. He does what He does because He is what He is. For a creature to love a sinner would be indifference to sin, ungodliness, the finding something in the creature to outweigh the obnoxiousness of the guilt. See Gen. 6 The fairness of the outward appearance hid the blackness of the guilt within. The judgment of God should have been to the sons of God, what the commandment was to man in Eden; but they, like Eve, look and desire what was forbidden to her by the word, to them by the moral character of the objects. The cross declares, not only that the Son of God loved me because He is love, but His oneness with God in His righteous judgment of all my guilt, and this by taking upon Himself all that the judgment was, in its divine reality. Worthy O Lamb of God, art Thou, That every knee to Thee should bow. W.

Chapter 48

Christ's Second Appearing, the Complement of His First: Part 1

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Heb. 9:27, 28.

These two verses teach us two very important facts: first, that death is the natural portion of man, and after this the judgment; but secondly, that to believers this death and judgment have been met by Christ, and consequently they expect with joy His second appearing. They look for Him: here is the distinction between the saints and the world. The reception through grace, or the refusal, of the love of God creates the contrast, as far as man is concerned, and not any efforts of his own. Man has no power of his own to meet that which he is already in, viz., death. But the believer finds that death and judgment on his behalf have been met by Christ; he consequently loves Him in remembrance of His work; and to such Christ will appear a second time without sin. No doubt He was so personally the first time; yet then He came into all the circumstances of sin, He was made sin for us. But as regards believers, He has at His second coming nothing more to do with sin: it will be unto salvation, to put them into possession of the results of His first coming. Salvation will be the consummation of what we at present believe. Seeing Him at the right hand of God, we look for a completion of bliss at His second appearing; and, this belief being in the heart, the results are seen in the life. The church's position is that of resting on the effects of His first coming, and she looks for all its results in the second.

This is brought out in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Believers, we are told in ver. 7, “have redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins.” Then follows the statement of our present condition, as “accepted in the Beloved.” It is this, that we are admitted to the knowledge of the counsels and intentions of God, and are told that “in the dispensation of the fullness of times God will gather together in one all things in Christ” (ver. 10). In the meanwhile, until the glory come, we have been sealed by His Holy Spirit, Who is “the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession” (ver. 12, 14). Thus then the church has redemption in Christ, and is expecting all things to be gathered together in Him; meanwhile she has the Holy Ghost.

The Lord Jesus is Himself the center of all God's purposes, and I shall endeavor to show that whatever may regard the church, the Jews, or the Gentiles, is merely the unfolding of His glory; but more than this, we shall see that the church of God is brought out, not only as enjoying the present blessing of communion, but also as joint-heir with Christ of His coming inheritance. In looking at the glory of Christ, believers are looking at their own glory, as being “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). We have a type or figure of this in Eve; Eve was not a part of the creation, nor was she lord of it as Adam was, but she was associated with him—joint-heir—in all his portion of inheritance. And so we shall find the church to be joined with Christ when He takes His rightful inheritance.

As to the purpose of God in Christ, His title to inherit all things is made out in three ways from scripture, while He Himself makes all of them good by redemption (John 12:32).

First, He has created all things (Col. 1:16), and as He created them, so they are “for Him.” “All things were created by Him and for Him.” He is the great Heir; and He must have possession of them all: “by Him all things are to be reconciled” (Col. 1:20). The whole world will by-and-by be reduced under subjection by Him. The second ground of His title is found in Heb. 1:2, where it is said the Son is “appointed Heir of all things.” The third ground, which stands in the counsels of God, is that man is to be set over all things, as we learn from Psa. 8.

This passage the apostle Paul uses three times, showing some points of special importance at each, and always insisting that the Lord Jesus is the “man” there spoken of. He quotes it, Heb. 2:6, die. “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, Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thine hands; Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.” The Apostle Paul argues that this leaves “nothing that is not put under Him” “But now,” says he, “we see not yet all things put under Him. But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor.” The half of the prophecy has been accomplished, because the One Who is to reign is crowned; and His being at the right hand of God is the pledge that it will all come to pass. We only see what is already accomplished in Jesus. The putting of all things under Him is not yet come to pass; it is neither done nor doing. He has not yet “taken to Himself His great power and reigned” (Rev. 11:17); but He sits hid in God, so far as this fact is concerned, till the time comes when, according to Psa. 110:1, God shall make His enemies to be His footstool.

Psa. 8 is again brought forward in Eph. 1:22, and here in its connection with the church sharing Christ's portion. Previously the apostle had been praying that they might know the same power, as in actual exercise towards them, which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead; and then he shows, ver. 22, 23, the church as being in very deed His body, “the fullness of Him That filleth all in all,” and thus necessarily the sharer with Him of His future glory. He will then be manifestly Heir of all things, the Head and Bridegroom to the church.

Psa. 8 is again quoted in 1 Cor. 15 There it is in connection with a kingdom, and also with resurrection, “every man in his own order” (1 Cor. 15:23); “Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming; then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; when He shall have put down all role and all authority and power; for He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.” Thus is the Psalm in question introduced, “For He hath put all things under His feet.” Everything now in disorder is to be put under this Man's feet; and when all is brought completely into subjection by Him, then the kingdom is to be delivered up.

In 2 Tim. 4:1 we shall find the kingdom connected with His appearing as being then set up, so that it is plain that Christ's appearing is not at the end (as people speak) but at the beginning of some period; for at the end of that period the kingdom is to be delivered up. Thus the apostle speaks: “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom.” This passage too shows clearly that the common opinion of a day (a twenty-four hours) of judgment is erroneous, because it is quoted here as lasting a certain time. His appearance is at the beginning of His kingdom, and then there will be a judgment on the living

wicked of those nations on whom God's wrath will specially fall for rejecting His gospel. But this judgment (greater or less in its exercise) will also run one during the period of His kingdom, whilst at the actual close of it, be the length what it may, the wicked dead will be judged. And if His appearing be at the beginning of His kingdom, it is clear that the church must be raised and with Him when He takes it. Christ, as we saw, is the first man raised; He is the “firstfruits of them that slept;” “afterward they that are Christ's at His coming” (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:15, 17). And then begins that kingdom which at the end (that is, at the end of a defined period, not spoken of in this chapter) He will deliver up to the One Who gave it to Him, that is, to God, even the Father, “that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28).

Christ's title to inherit all things having been stated, and also the church's title to heirship with Him, it was nevertheless said that this as yet is but in purpose, because it is neither done nor doing, but Christ is sitting at the right hand of the Father, and “expecting till His enemies be made His footstool” (Heb. 10:13). If the question be asked, What is doing? the answer is, that during this waiting time His joint-heirs are being gathered by the operation of the Spirit through the preached word.

It may be well briefly to notice how the church is brought out into this blessed connection with Him, now by faith, and hereafter in manifestation. It is by the quickening power of the second Adam, 1 Cor. 15:45, 47, which as truly associates those who have it with their Head, and sets us in the same relations to Him, as our natural birth does with the first Adam; so that we are heirs of His glory, just as we are heirs of all the miseries into which we have been introduced by the fall of the first Adam. This is treated of by the apostle Paul, in the way of comparison, in the latter part of Rom. v. The life so given puts us in spirit where Jesus is; we are “risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead” (Col. 2:12). It is not a something to be sought for, but we have got the life, which, connecting us with our Head, makes us enjoy holiness down here, and we are waiting for the glory which shall make us actual sharers of what our Head Himself enjoys.

It is necessary to see that as this eternal life, which believers have at present in Christ, has nothing in common with the world around, so the issue of it will be in the resurrection of the body, at a distinct time, and on a different principle from that of the wicked—a “first resurrection,” Rev. 20:5, in consequence of a life previously given. The saints are raised because they are one with Him Who is risen. They are raised as the result of union with the Lord Jesus, whereas the wicked are raised to be judged by Him, and not at the same time. In Rom. 8:11 we find the principle, which is “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

(To be continued.)

Chapter 49

Christ's Second Appearing, the Complement of His First: Part 2

There is no such thing in Scripture as a common resurrection. The prevailing opinion is, that at a certain day all men, whether good or bad, shall stand before God, and then receive their final doom; but Scripture does not speak of it in this way. It constantly distinguishes between the resurrections of the just and of the unjust. One passage indeed might, to a careless reader, seem to give a color to such an opinion. In John 6 the Lord speaks of raising up some at the last day; but He speaks solely of those whom “the Father had given Him,” those who “believed on Him,” those who “came to Him” drawn by the Father, and who “ate His flesh and drank His blood,” terms for believers. He is speaking here of a “last day” alone to the righteous: there is no allusion to the wicked. The Lord impresses the truth that, whatever blessing comes, it must be in connection with resurrection. The last day must here have reference to something familiar to Jewish thoughts, as when the disciples (who were Jews by birth) asked Him, “What shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world (age)?” (Matt. 24:3.)

In every other passage the Scriptures plainly distinguish the two resurrections. In Luke 14:14 it is said, “Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” Again, Luke 20:35, “They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [age], and the resurrection from the dead.” Here is a remarkable distinction, worthiness is attributed to those who obtain this resurrection. It is a distinct class. Again, 1 Cor. 15:23, “Every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.” Nothing can be plainer than this. Again, 1 Thess. 4, “the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds." Again, Phil. 3:11, “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of [from] the dead.” Paul could not be anxious to attain to what the wicked had in common with him: indeed the phrase means rather “from among the dead” (see 1 Peter 1:3).

A passage in John 5:25-29 is often quoted as settling the question against a first resurrection. “The hour is coming when all that are in their 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 damnation” (lit., judgment). But just before, ver. 25, the Lord said, “The hour is coming and now is, when the dead (those dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. 2:1) shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” This hour has lasted through Christ's life, and eighteen hundred years since. It is the hour or time of quickening of souls. There is a period during which souls are quickened, and a period when bodies are raised. The hour of ver. 27, 29 will be the time, at the beginning of which there will be to the righteous a resurrection of life; and at the end (be the length what it may) to the wicked a resurrection of judgment. Christ will have no need to judge the children, to cause them to give Him honor, for having given us life, ver. 25, we honor Him now; but “as the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son,” as “at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,” Phil. 2:10, so the wicked will be forced to honor Him in spite of themselves, and to them accordingly there will be a resurrection of judgment, a summons to judgment because they have no part in Him, whilst to the righteous their resurrection will be but the accomplishment, as to their bodies, of a life previously given. Nor will the period of the one be

at the same time with that of the other. The raising of the church, or the resurrection of the righteous, will take place when Christ comes, but the raising of the wicked dead not until after, or at the close of Christ's reign; “The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (Rev. 20:5).

The hope, then, of the church is the coming of Christ. You cannot read the Epistles of Paul without seeing that this was a grand truth to be kept as a present thing before the soul. This event has often been confounded with death. We are sometimes told that the coming of Christ is that which happens to every man at his death. But it is something quite different: you cannot apply the passages which speak of it to death; and for this reason, that it will be an event which shall find the living in ease and luxury. “Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matt. 24:30).

In the mind of the apostle, this doctrine, and not death, was linked with every motive to duty, and to a holy walk, and with comfort in every kind of affliction. For instance, as a motive to holiness, 1 John 3:2, 3, “We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is; and every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure.” Again, with comfort in sorrow—the apostolic consolation, when saints were mourning over the loss of their brethren who had died, was, not that they were to go to the place where those who had departed were, but that God would bring those who had departed back again. See 1 Thess. 4:13-18. It is the motive to patience, James 5:7, 8. “Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.” “Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” Again, what comfort in persecution, 2 Thess. 1.! “To you who are troubled rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed.” The coming of One Who was gone, Who was the object of their affections and hopes, though now they saw Him not, was that which the Holy Ghost presented to animate their courage and comfort their hearts. This hope was to act on their consciences in a sanctifying way, by taking their affections out of the world, and giving them patience in the trials they were in, through faith. And lastly, I may ask what is the inducement to a zealous preaching of the gospel by Paul, and to a careful tending of the flock, a picture of which is presented to us in 1 Thess. 2. It was this, “What is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming” (1 Thess. 2:19)?

The putting off this blessed event brought in all kinds of evil. Yea, we may say the loss of it was the ruin of the church, considered in its earthly relations here below. For what is the sign of the evil servant? He saith, “my Lord delayeth His coming” (Matt. 24:48). It was this that brought him “to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken,” ver. 49. The church has been unfaithful to her calling, but of this the word of God warns. In Matt. 25 we have the parable of the ten virgins, who are introduced to us as taking their lamps, and going forth to meet the bridegroom. The bridegroom is not the Holy Ghost. We are converted “to wait for His Son from heaven,” 1 Thess. 1:9, and not for the Holy Ghost, Whom (with reverence be it spoken) we possess already: John 14:26; 16:13.

“While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept (ver. 5). We know that the Lord has tarried for eighteen hundred years, and the whole church has been slumbering and sleeping.

What is it that arouses them? What is it that puts them in their proper position of waiting? Why, the midnight cry, ver. 6. “At midnight there was a cry raised, Behold, the Bridegroom [cometh].” This, I

trust, has in some little measure gone forth of late years, bringing the church back again to its real hope. All had forgotten it, and all awoke when the midnight cry was made. The real difference between the wise and foolish virgins was this: that one class had oil in their lamps, oil being a type of the grace of the Holy Spirit, the hidden grace; and the others had not. It is not here individual watchfulness, denoting a saint, which is set forth; for all together slept, and all together awoke: but it is the forgetfulness of the church, as a body, of its hope, and its consequent slothfulness.

With regard to the character or manner of the coming, we learn it from Acts 1:10, 11. “And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” Now this is quite another thing from Christ's judging at the end of all things; for then, Rev. 20:11, will be the judgment of the great white throne, the heaven and the earth having fled away from before His face, and no place being found for them; whereas Christ is to come back as He went away. Further, His coming, as we learn from Acts 3:19, 22, is a time, not of the earth and heaven fleeing away, but of restitution of all things, viz., so that seasons of refreshing “may come from the presence of the Lord, and He may send Jesus Christ, Who before was appointed unto you, Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” The prophets do not speak of things in heaven, but of the happiness and blessing that is to be on the earth. They speak of “the earth being filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14), and of the face of the covering being taken off all peoples, and of the day when death shall be swallowed up in victory (compare Isa. 25:7, 8, and 1 Cor. 15:54); but for these things God shall send Jesus. Acts 3:20.

(To be continued.)

John 14:2. It is a blessed thought that Christ will Himself introduce us into the Father's house—into heaven. What an entrance will that be when He leads us in, the fruit of the travail of His soul, His own, and glorified according to His worth, with all His heavenly company there! And we await that day.

Chapter 50

Christ's Second Appearing, the Complement of His First: Part 3

II. But it is time to turn to another part of this subject. If the church is taken away at the coming of the Lord Jesus, what bearing will this coming have upon the world at large, that is, upon Jews and Gentiles? We have seen that towards the church (viz., believers now) its aspect is nothing but blessing. It will be the end of their suffering state, and the beginning of their glorified one. But what will it be to the world? This brings us to a division of the subject.

There have been three great displays, or systems, set under God in the world, which have all failed: viz., the Jews, the Gentiles, and the church of God, (as to the testimony committed to it); and a short history of their failure, and of God's future intentions toward them, is needful. When God pronounced “Lo-Ammi” (not-My-people) on the Jews, He delivered power into the hands of the Gentiles, in the person of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, and it has continued ever since. When the Jews and Gentiles (the fourth monarchy, or Roman empire, at that moment appearing in universal dominion) agreed in rejecting the Messiah, God brought in the church, a heavenly people, not to take to itself earthly dominion, but down here to be a witness to Christ as set at the right hand of God. Now the scripture represents all these as failing, Jews, Gentiles, and Christendom as such.

With regard to the Jews (at present Lo-Ammi, or, not-My-people) it is necessary to see that their failure arose from their disobedience to a law, which they had promised to observe. But they will be restored to the land of Canaan, owing to the free mercy of God, on account of His promises to Abraham, notwithstanding their failure, for which they have been and will yet have to be punished. In Gen. 13:15 we find the land of Canaan given to Abraham and to his seed forever; and in Gen. 15:13, 14 the prophetic announcement of the captivity in Egypt, and of the recovery thence, and the gift of the land is again made to his seed by an unconditional covenant of God. See also Gen. 17:7, 8. We know that the former part of this took place; that is, the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt, and brought to Mount Sinai where the law was given. God's dealings with them up to that point had been simply in grace. Then it was (Ex. 19:8) that they put themselves, of their own will, under the law. “All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.” But they failed under this law, as the sin of the golden calf, Ex. 32 witnessed.

This, however, did not touch the promises to Abraham. The intercession of Moses (ver. 13) is grounded on these promises, and on the oath of God; and it was owing to these that they came into the land at all. So in all God's after dealings with them. Though He chastised them whilst in the land, owing to their broken engagements, and at length cast them out, yet the promises made to Abraham still remain certain to them. See Lev. 26; Mic. 7:20.

There are two great principles connected with their final restoration, which seem to distinguish it from all previous dealings, however gracious, with them. First, they will be planted in the land, under the new covenant (Jer. 32:37-40). Secondly, they will have the presence of the Messiah (Ezek. 34:23, 24; 37:21-28; Jer. 33:14-26). When Messiah first came, they rejected Him; but even that, while it filled up the measure of their guilt, did not touch the promises given without condition.

Many of those in Isaiah, that in 2 Sam. 7, and those in Amos 9:11- 15, remain still unaccomplished.

With regard to the Gentile power, it was not only to end in sin, but in open rebellion against God; but in this the professing Christian world was to have a large and leading share. It had, as was before stated, its origin in Nebuchadnezzar; it was afterward continued in the Persian, Grecian, and Roman monarchies. The latter was in existence at the time of Christ, and, instigated by the Jews, used the power originally given by God in putting to death His own Son (Acts 4:25-27). This power will continue until “the stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall break in pieces and consume these kingdoms” in their last form, viz., under the ten kings who give their power to the beast (Dan. 2:40-44; Rev. 17:11-14).

And here I must stop to remark upon a great error which prevails, viz., that the “little stone” was the setting up of Christ's kingdom at the day of Pentecost, and that it has been growing into a great mountain ever since; or, in other words, that the preaching of the gospel in the present dispensation is that which is to convert the world. Now let it be observed, that the stone does not begin to grow until it has broken in pieces the great image. After this, it becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth. It is not a diffusive principle winch insinuates itself into the system of the image, and changes its moral character and condition; but its operation is destructive of the whole system of the image, which becomes as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, before the stone begins to grow into a mountain. The scripture does not speak of the universal prevalence of Christianity while the image subsists; it says that the stone must destroy the whole being of their empires, by the distraction of the last, then to become itself the center of a new system. The “little stone” is really typical of Christ coming to judgment, and His kingdom will be established after this; when indeed “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9).

But again, in Rev. 16 we are told that three unclean spirits are to go forth, as the spirits of demons, working miracles, “unto the kings [of the earth, and] of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” Is this the gospel bringing the whole world under subjection to Christ? Whatever interpretation of this passage we may give as to details, it is manifestly the wide extended exercise of Satan's corrupting and malignant influence, gathering together the powers of this world in the last times, to conflict with, and consequent judgment by, Almighty God (Zeph. 3:8, 9).

But what of the professing church? Scripture is not silent here; the end is failure and rain, as everything has been that has ever been entrusted to man. First, there is a positive revelation in Matt. 13 of tares in the field, where the Son of man had sown. This was not common heathenism, nor unconverted sinners, as men; but evil entering into the place where good was sown. The question was asked whether they were to be rooted up; and the answer was, No. It is not the work of the present dispensation to root out, but to sow. We may preach the gospel, but the evil must go on where the good seed was sown, till the harvest of judgment. But secondly, the days of the Son of man (Luke 17) are likened to the days of Noah and Lot. “Even thus,” is the portentous conclusion, “shall it be when the Son of man is revealed.” Again, so far from blessed days coming, scripture reveals that “in the last days perilous times shall come” (2 Tim. 3:1). And then follows, almost word for word, the same character of the professing church as is given of the heathen, as

under the sentence of a reprobate mind (comp. 2 Tim. 3:2-5 with Rom. 1:28-32). Yes, the revealed end of the professing church is that of iniquity, like the heathen. At the same time a form of godliness, something (it may be) very beautiful to attract the eye, but rottenness and dead men's bones within.

Again, the mark of the close of the church is revealed in 1 John 2:18, “Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.” This was the characteristic of the last time, not in-coming and out-flowing blessing, but antichrists who sprang from the church, precursors of the antichrist whom Christ is to destroy, and not of general blessing before the judgment. Again, in 2 Thess. 2 we have evil traced through its course, from the apostles' time to Christ's appearing, leaving no room for intervening universal blessing. “The mystery of iniquity doth already work (says Paul): only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way; and then shall that wicked [one] be revealed whom the Lord Jesus shall consume,” &c. It had began in the apostles' time, and would go on until Christ came. But in Jude the declension and falling away is still more palpable. He gave (ver. 1) “all diligence to write onto them of the common salvation;” that is, it was his wish to have enlarged on this common blessing. But he was hindered, and was obliged to exhort them to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. So far from there being an extension of good, he found the time already come to contend against evil: evil men having crept in unawares, ungodly men, “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” That is, they specially denied the Lordship of Christ, first morally and then in open rebellion. Here is the character of Antichrist. He denies the Father, and the Son, he denies that Jesus is the Christ (1 John 2:22), and he denies Jesus Christ come in the flesh (1 John 4:3 John 7). But did Jude contemplate a bettering of such a state? No. His words are, “Enoch prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all,” &c. (ver. 14, 15). These very men that had crept in forced him to say that these are the men that have been already prophesied about. He refers them in ver. 11 into three classes, a kind of triple character of the apostacy, showing also the progress which the evil in man makes. 1st, Cain: natural evil, hatred. 2nd, Balaam: ecclesiastical corruption, preaching for reward. 3rd, Core: independence against God, standing up against His supremacy, denying Christ in His lordship and priesthood. And in this open rebellion, or gainsaying, they perish.

The judgment being thus shown, the inquiry may be made, How and through what agency is the earth, and especially the land of the Jews, hereafter to be blessed according to what has been previously insisted upon? The reply is, that the judgment is not absolute; and though it will fall very heavily upon Jerusalem (Zech. 13:8, 9), and indeed upon all the nations (Isa. 66:16; Jer. 25:31), yet “a remnant shall return” (Isa. 1:9; 10:21, 22; 66:18, 19). The Jewish remnant who escape the great trouble of the latter day (Jer. 30:7) will be the seed or nucleus of the future nation; and their city, Jerusalem, the metropolis of the world.

“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem; and it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house.....shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Loup from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:2). When her light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon her, Gentiles shall come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising (Isa. 60:1-3); or, as it is expressed in another passage, “Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit” (Isa.

27:6). After the judgment (greater or less in extent, according to greater or less light (Lake 12: 47, 48) on the living, we have abundant testimony from scripture of the Gentiles being brought tinder the gracious yet truthful sway of the Lord Jesus, the center of His actings being Jerusalem. See, among other passages, Psa. 72; Zeph. 3:8, 9; Zech. 8:20-23; Rom. 11.

This is not the same as the blessing of the church; it is in the heavenly places that we are blessed. Having anticipated the day when Israel “shall look on Him Whom they pierced” (Zech. 12:10), we have our portion even now in heavenly places (Eph. 1:3): much more then at the time when He is manifested. Nor need we be downcast by the evil around. Having oil in our lamps, the grace of the Spirit in our hearts, let the night be as dark as it may, the believer will be able to say, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Having redemption through His precious blood, and being quickened by the Spirit, let your affections be so sanctified as to desire nothing else. Let us separate ourselves from everything that He will judge at His coming, and so shall we not be ashamed.

Chapter 51

Communion or Part With Christ

Three things, it is plain, especially come out in this chapter: first, the full and perfect finishing of the work which the Father had given the Lord Jesus to do; and secondly, while that gives the full consciousness of the place we are in with God, there is the jealous care, and the holiness and watchfulness in the path in which we are called to walk down here; and thirdly, the blessed and gracious love of the Lord— “having loved His own which were in the world He loved them onto the end,” and the way He made Himself a servant in order to minister to us.

It is important for us as Christians to see our place with God in Christ; to know distinctly what that place is. Many sincere souls do not know it—do not know their relationship with God, and what the blessed Son of God has done for them in dying for them and bringing them to God; and, at the same time, how this bears upon holiness of walk.

The Lord shows here that no defilement can be allowed, and then adds the measure of holiness. Suitability of walk and conduct flows from the place you are in. You cannot expect any one who is not a child or a servant to behave as a child or a servant. Evidently, then, it is of all importance to know the place 1 am in, as all my duties flow from it. The moment the relationship is there, the duties are there; but you cannot get the relationship by doing the duties. It is of all importance to see the connection between the grace of God that brings salvation, and our practical walk; we must see what the relationship is, before we can have the consciousness of its duties. The Lord would bring us, perhaps through painful exercises, to the consciousness of the place we are in, and the gracious loving provision there is for us in that place never to allow unholiness. You see, beloved friends, if it were only the being saved, this would be a blessed thing; but He brings us into positive relationship with Himself, in infinite love and perfect righteousness. He came into a world of sinners for this. We have the treasure in earthen vessels; but the relationship is settled: “Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Therefore His first word to the Magdalene after His resurrection is, “Go tell My brethren, I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.” My Father is your Father too. He wishes them in His place; He has brought them into it; and He tells them where He has brought them.

But this is not all. The moment I estimate the cross according to the word of God, I get to this, as the apostle says, “If one died for all, then were all dead.” I see One who came in unspeakable love to save me. God said, I have yet one Son; one thing I can do—to see if I can waken up right thoughts and feelings in these husbandmen. But when they saw the Son, they cast Him out and slew Him. In calling ourselves Christians, we profess the Son of God in a world which has cast Him out; we are in a world of sinners, condemned sinners.

God was dealing with man; He tried and tested man, who had got out of his place where God had put him in Paradise, to show whether his heart could be reclaimed. But all this ended in bringing out the condition in which man was; it showed that he preferred anything to God—money, pleasure, duties (I do not speak now of sin), but no object too small to govern the heart and to shut out Christ. Take dress: is this too small? Take money: it is the same case with all our hearts. You

never found a natural man thinking of Christ as the object of his heart. If alone in a room for two or three hours, he thinks of his sorrows, of his joys, but not of Christ.

You never find a man ashamed of a false religion. A Mahometan, if you are making a bargain with him, will stop to say his prayers if the hour comes; and you may wait till he has done. Of gods that even man might be ashamed of, they are not ashamed. But you find true Christians ashamed of confessing Christ. The true God people are ashamed of; but of a false religion, never!

Any object and every object in the natural heart has displaced Christ. I own Jesus the Son of God has come and died for me; and do I prefer a bit of dress to Him? All this tells us what scripture says—that the carnal mind is enmity against God; that every object is dominant over it; and even when we do love God, we are often ashamed of Him!

It is not now a question of trying to arrange ourselves a little and set things straight; but the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. My natural condition is, I am lost.

Where men get their enjoyment, if you only bring Christ in, it is all spoiled. The natural man never enjoys Christ, and as Christians we have to watch ourselves, lest we slip into that state of things.

First comes the honest conviction that I am lost; and then I find what God has done. And this is another thing altogether.

The law came to require from me; but Christ came to bring salvation to me, because I am lost. If I own myself as a sinner, I cannot go into heaven as a sinner, of course; so the question is, What has He done for me that I may be cleansed? Supposing I have been brought thoroughly to confess that I am lost, I turn to Christ, and what do I find there? That, when I did not think of God, God was thinking of me. This is what I learn; and I have then, with no seeking of mine, what the spring of God's thoughts and heart were toward me, that. He spared not His own Son. If I acknowledge myself as a sinner, I find what the blessed Son of God has done; I find the spring of His heart. He cannot allow sin. He is perfect in holiness and righteousness; and I find Him doing, what love always does when it is real: He considers the whole state of its object. I was dead, and Christ comes into death; judgment was against me, and He takes the judgment. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And I see One coming in love and goodness and grace; which astonishes me, as it did the poor woman by the well. He must bring us into truth and light. He says, You are so vile, you are not fit to show your face to a decent person. But there is the revelation of God in Christ; it comes not as a claim upon me, but as grace to me; it tells me I am a sinner, or why should it come? It brings all this out to me. If the highest measure of grace is the cross of Christ, it is the very thing that shows me where I was. Why should He go down into the dreadful ditch, if there was not someone there to pull out?

I get this perfect work done completely. “I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do;” so that He is set down at the right hand of God, accepted by God. He gave Him in love and accepted Him in righteousness. God is satisfied, more than satisfied—glorified about the sin. The cross is the place where good and evil met completely, absolutely. There all the evil of man is shown out against Christ. He was going about doing good, healing all their diseases; and even Pilate could say, What do you kill Him for? It was enmity against God.

But if I get all the wickedness of man's heart, what do I find on the other side? Absolute obedience and perfect love to His Father. “That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do.” Where do I learn love? “Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us.”

There is no such perfect display of perfect righteousness anywhere, as in Christ drinking that dreadful cup. I get most solemn righteousness and the perfect love of God to the sinner too. If we look at the moral glory of the cross, the whole question of sin was perfectly settled, and God has glorified Christ up there. What did He die for? For my sins, according to the scripture. If I come as a poor vile sinner to the cross, I see Him bearing my sins in His own body on the tree, and now in glory. Has He got them there? No! I see Him standing here for me in righteousness, drinking that dreadful cup, the very thought of which made Him sweat great drops of blood. And then, having purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: not like the Jewish priests who were often offering the same sacrifices; but He forever sat down, because the work is finished. If the work is not perfect, it never will be. I am not speaking now of your appreciation of it, but of the work itself; if we live near to God, we shall appreciate it more every day. But the work is done.

I get then, beloved friends, this blessed truth, that, coming to God by Him, that work is done which is a proof of the love of God to me when I was a sinner, and I find it accepted by God when I was a sinner. Of course my heart is changed too, or I should not care about it in that way.

He is waiting till His enemies are made His footstool, having brought me to God by that work. And God is anxious in His love to put it before us in every shape in which it can meet our need.

Do you say you are guilty? but God has justified you. Defiled by sin? yes, but God says, I have cleansed you with the precious blood of My Son; but you say, Oh! I have offended God dreadfully. So you have; but God has forgiven you. Then the Holy Ghost came down at Pentecost, and is given to every one who believes. “In Whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.” “Your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost.” “If any man confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.” Oh! that those words rested in our hearts and consciences, beloved friends.

There is the place we are brought into; but we shall not get fully into the glory till the Lord Jesus Christ comes, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself.” “When He shall appear, we shall be like Him.” “The glory Thou hast given Me, I have given them.” The purpose of God is (I am speaking to you as believers) to bring us into the same glory as His Son.

I earnestly desire for your hearts, that you should get clear hold of this—how all is cleared of the first Adam, that we might have all the blessing the Second Man gets. He became a man that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. The dignity of His Person is always maintained; but He will never be satisfied until He sees you there in the same glory, with Himself and as Himself forever.

If I pay a man's debts, and leave him without a farthing, he is a ruined man still; but Christ has paid our debts, and has, so to speak, given us an immense fortune besides; for “as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” The scripture teems with passages which show the way in which we are associated with Himself. As soon as Christ was gone up into heaven, the witness of

divine righteousness, the Holy Ghost came down, that we might know it. “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.” How can I say Father, if I do not know that I am a child? It would be hypocrisy. If the conscience is purged by the blood of Christ, relationship is known by His Person, and then I most walk as a child; but I must know that I am a child first. You cannot expect people to walk as Christians if they are not Christians. Something else has to come first: they have to confess their sins, and be saved by faith.

Now if you believe in the Lord Jesus, beloved friends, can you say, I know I am in Christ? “At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.” I have to manifest the life of Jesus in my mortal body, but I must have it first: how can I manifest it, if I have not got it?

Supposing I have listened to that word, “My Father and your Father,” He has brought me into the same place as Himself, and I am waiting for God's Son to take me there in person. Death has lost its sting; and if I die, it is to be with the Lord. “Absent from the body, present with the Lord.” The full result will not be till He comes again, and the marriage of the Lamb takes place; we are not in the glory yet, we know.

We might think that Christ having gone up into glory, all His service was over; But it is not so: love never gives up itself, and never gives up the happiness of those it loves. If a child goes wrong, the Father's heart yearns over him; He may have to punish, but the heart goes after him. Christ's love is perfect, and it never gives up its service if it can make the loved one happy; and this we get here. The supper over—He came from God and was going back to God in all the blessed perfectness in which He came; and what does He do? He says, I am among you as one that serveth. Is there an end of His service now? No; He rises from supper, testifies He cannot stay with them here, but tells them He must have them with Him there. He could not stay as Messiah. I am going away as your Forerunner, “I go to prepare a place for you.”

We get this in two ways. First, He is as priest serving, “He ever liveth [think of that!] to make intercession for us.” This is not exactly for sin, but that we may not sin. I a poor sinner upon the earth, and He is always at God's right hand occupied with me. But in this chapter is another thing. Supposing I do sin, how are my feet to be washed? (This alludes no doubt to the custom of the priest's consecration. His body was all washed when he was consecrated: but whenever he went to do anything at the altar, he washed his hands and feet. It was as much as to say, there must be holiness). “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet;” he cannot be regenerate over again. The word used for washing the body and washing the feet is not the same in the original of this chapter or anywhere else.

We are cleansed by water and by blood. But then there is always this danger: here I am, walking through this world always ready to defile me. There is the danger of picking up dirt upon my feet. And when the Lord goes into heaven He takes what heaven is as a measure of our walk. He does not pray that we should be taken out of the world, but kept from evil. Looking up to the Lord in glory, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. “Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” I see Christ in glory; I know I am going to be like Him; and I therefore want to walk as like Him now as ever I can. This is what Paul meant, “that I may win Him.” He sees Christ in glory, knows he is going to be like Him, and now tries in every possible way to walk as He walked here.

But supposing we fail—there is no excuse for doing so, it is our own carelessness and neglect—then He says, I am going up on high and I shall wash your feet. I have washed you here; “ye are clean through the word that I have spoken to you.” Peter was ashamed of seeing the Lord there like a servant to wash his feet; but, when he hears he must be washed, he says, “Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.” No; He says, Not quite right. “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father and He is the propitiation for our sins.” The propitiation is unchanged, but another service comes in. If I have sinned, I do not deny that I am under the blood of sprinkling. But can the Father have fellowship with an unholy thing? No! It says, “if any man sin,” not “if any man repent.” The advocacy brings us to repentance, to be sure.

If I have let only an evil thought come in, do you think God has communion with that? It were blasphemy to say so. I have found my pleasure, if only for a moment, in what made Christ's agony on the cross. Horrible to say so! But if it made His agony, it cannot be imputed to me. I am convicted, humbled, led like poor Peter to repentance. It was not because he repented that Christ prayed for him; but Peter repented because Christ prayed.

What I get in the present work of the Lord Jesus is this: if by anything I defile my feet, He takes away the taint, because I belong to His place. He does not raise the question whether I do belong to it, He acts because I do belong to it. “Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.” Holiness is maintained, because I am in this relationship. God says, I cannot have defiled people in My house. He chastens that we may be partakers of His holiness. He brings the word of God, which reveals what I am, to bear upon my conscience. He restores my soul and leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

The Christian is standing between the first coming of Christ which accomplished redemption, and His second coming which takes him to glory; and meanwhile the Holy Ghost is given to every one that believes. He makes the cry, Abba, Father, the witness that I am a child, and He is the earnest of the inheritance. He gives me the certainty of the efficacy of Christ's work when He first came, and leads my heart on to the glory.

But I must have holiness, and I get grace still working and giving me the measure of what I am. It tells me I am going to be like Christ; and he who has this hope purifies himself. And here is the measure of my walk— “even as He is pure.” Not that I have attained; I never shall, until I am with Christ; but I ought to be going on, never to soil my feet, never to do anything inconsistent. There are three things: we are to walk worthily of God, Who has called us to His kingdom and glory; worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing; worthily of the vocation wherewith we are called. Our calling is put before us in these three shapes.

We get the perfect settled consciousness of the relationship into which we are brought; and then the conduct which suits those who are in this place.

Do your souls know, beloved friends, supposing yen profess it, that your consciences have got hold of the efficacy of His work? “Peace I leave with you;” can you say yen have got it? Do you fear the judgment-seat? There is no place in which a Christian may be so bold, because, raised in glory as He is, so are we. Do you believe that your sins will be no more remembered? Many a one sees it in scripture and says it is true; but can you stand in thought before the judgment-seat, in the consciousness that it is so?—that you are become divine righteousness before God?

One more question. If you can thus stand, are you seeking to be in everything the epistle of Christ? whatever you do, to do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus? (We shall need carefulness, searching of the word, &c.—exercises which make good soldiers.) The motive is the great thing. If I love my father, and he wishes any book to be laid this way instead of that, I put it so, because I love my father.

The Lord give us to have His will as the one object of our lives, the motive of all we do—to remember that we are not our own but bought with a price. May He give us to have our eyes upon Him, that we may know His love and seek His will!

Chapter 52

On Conformity to the World

One principal purpose which the Lord had in view, by continuing for a season in their present state the people who should be gathered together in one, through His death, was that a practical witness of the character of God might be given to the world; and this in the joint testimony of those who by one Spirit were united together; and who, though not indeed taken out of the world, were to be delivered from the evil of it. Such was the church, whilst continuing in holy separateness; it was a living warning to all around, “of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.” But where is that witness now? A long and dreary period has passed away since the church stood as a burning and a shining light; and the very name of Christian was sufficient to brand its possessor as an enemy of the world. Its failure is continually and painfully exhibited in the overwhelming mass of nominal profession, which now assumes its place, and the perplexity and inconsistency which tarnish the walk of many a child of God in the present day.

But though as a collective body the church has lost the place of witness, still is each believer a temple of the Holy Ghost; and as such, answerable for being led by the Spirit in all the circumstances in which he may be placed. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, THEY are the sons of God.” One thing is clear, that with the world the Spirit of Christ can have no connection; for He must ever lead from the world to God. As professing therefore to be guided by the Spirit, it is a sure and safe criterion in every case of doubt and perplexity, to consider how far God has fellowship in that which we do. The present day is so peculiarly characterized by the inconsistent walking of believers, and the efforts of Satan to unite them with one or another of the manifold forms of worldliness, that it may be well to notice some of the prevailing evils, which have contributed, in no small degree, to lower the standard of Christian practice. Remember, that the word of God is clear, “All that is in the world is not of the Father;” and that upon all the natural heart desires scripture passes one unqualified judgment, “That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.”

There is one special snare to which believers are peculiarly liable in the present time; more perhaps than in any other since Paul warned Timothy against the ■ντιθ■σεις τ■ς ψευδων■μου γν■σεως, “the oppositions of science falsely so called,” words which so well describe the character of the antithetical philosophy of the present day. We speak of the seductions of the intellect, to which many who may be free from the grosser forms of self-seeking are peculiarly exposed. The expressions of scripture respecting the world and worldliness are too often qualified by them to suit their own particular tastes and propensities. Men easily profess to abjure that for which they have little or no natural inclination, whilst they strenuously contend for that which is only the world in its more refined state, and is all the more dangerous, because more delusive, than the temptations peculiarly addressed to the lower tendencies of human nature. The two are distinguished by the apostle as the desires of the flesh and of the mind (Eph. 2). And verily the spiritual idolatry, which is the sin of the present day, the consummation of all that man is capable of doing against God, is infinitely more dangerous from its subtlety, and the manifold phases which it assumes in the mind, than all the other depths into which a wayward heart and the devices of the enemy may beguile

us.

Let us not be mistaken in this. We argue not against the improvement of the mind. Most assuredly it is desirable that every faculty should be fully and healthfully developed; and education, in the proper sense of the word (i.e., the opening all the powers of the mind, and directing them to God's glory), is above all things to be looked to. But the error against which we firmly contend is that of making the means the end. The desire for the improvement of the mind, considered by itself, is but a refined selfishness if it stops there, and does not train every power of the intellect with a direct view to the service of God. All that tends not to His service, all that may not in some way be wielded as an instrument in this work, is for self alone; and in its results will invariably be found unprofitable, however splendid such acquirements may appear to the mind which judges of their value by the proportion of credit which they obtain amongst men.

For let it be considered, as assuredly we ought, that life, whether natural or spiritual, is ACTION; and in the Christian, action constant and undivided for God's glory. Nay more; the mind which is held to be the most informed and accomplished is in fact but a wilderness, if it knows not the only true wisdom. It is grievous when we look, not merely to the pursuits of the natural man, following the wanderings of his own mind, and seeking a phantom which eludes his grasp, but to the objects which engage so much of the attention even of God's children, to see such an infinity of labor bestowed on what is called truth, but is not so; and the practical denial of its only source, the knowledge never ending, never wearying, of God, that knowledge which also opens a field for the richest and most varied application of every intellectual power, and maintains them all in true and healthful proportion. Anything short of this (from which it is manifest that the great mass of what is called the intelligence of the world is systematically and voluntarily alienated) is but the laborious idleness of the mind seeking happiness in something out of God, and the evidence that it has never yet acknowledged the full length and breadth of the Spirit's testimony concerning Jesus, “that in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

It is well for every believer to realize how much God can do—how little man. All human aids indeed we take with thankfulness, as from Providence, Who orders these things, as well as all others, to work together for His own glory, though men are little conscious of it. Yet they are still but aids; and one ray of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God has more real effect in expanding the mind, than all the combined instrumentality of human genius and learning besides. Things are not depreciated, as has been rightly said, when placed on their true level. The machinery in ordinary use is not undervalued by the assertion that, when it has raised man to its utmost reach, God can raise him infinitely higher. At a time when mere human power is rated so high, and the productions of that which is purely man's intellect are gazed upon by many, as in no small degree approximating to a participation in the divine nature; it is well to remember the terms in which scripture speaks of all that descends to us from Adam, not merely in this body of death, but in the mind which dwells within it.

“There is none that understandeth,” is God's estimate of all the boasted light of human reason; though we know it not till informed by the Spirit. “Having the understanding darkened” is the universal character of man, however bright the array of natural powers with which he is gifted may appear. And let it not be forgotten, that the source of much of this power is “the tree of knowledge of good and evil;” so that men ignorantly pride themselves upon that knowledge which found an

entrance into the mind only through the first act of disobedience against God; and which, as to all its diversified semblances, proves itself in every natural man to be the legitimate fruit of the tree from which it sprang, which was good indeed in itself, but was obtained by the subtlety of Satan, in disbelief of God's sufficiency. It is instructive to observe that, when Cain went forth from the presence of the Lord, the inventions and luxuries of life began; and doubtless power in the earth continued exclusively with his descendants, until the “sons of God,” the holy seed, united themselves with the children of men, and all trace of separation in the fear of God was lost in the indiscriminate exhibition of self-will and violence which overspread the world.

The child of this world often professes to approach God by science and the study of nature. And here again the Christian is called upon to discriminate. In that which is truly and properly the work of God in creation, he cannot but rejoice; yea, and renders “glory, honor, and power” to Him “Whose hand has made all these things;” for they are His, and are the expression of His wondrous mind. We see in them (what we cannot see in the works of fallen man) the evidence and expression of His eternal power and Godhead; and so far glory in them. But as sons of God we are called to know Him in a character far more excellent and blessed, even as THE FATHER. And this knowledge we do not gain from without, for it is the Spirit's special office “to tell us plainly of the Father.” All other ways by which men may profess to approach Him bring them no farther than the Gentile outer court of the Holy of Holies; an Israelite alone can enter in.

Let us learn by the example of one who had tried everything, and not only sought out and gathered to himself all earthly glory and pleasure, such as fell to the lot of none, before or after (“for what can the man do that cometh after the king?"); but applied to the discovery such wisdom as none ever had; and moreover exceeded all in knowledge, “for he spake of trees, of the cedar that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth which had heard of his wisdom.” Yet what is the end? “I, the preacher, was king over Israel, in Jerusalem; and I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are under heaven. This sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.”

The character of the intellect of the present day, by which so many “professing themselves to be wise” are led astray, is but one of the manifold forms of human perverseness setting itself up against God; with more refinement it may be, but with no less determinateness of opposition than in those who impugn God's declared will because He has not written a revelation of it in the skies. “The Greeks seek after wisdom.” Hence have arisen the philosophical expositions of Christianity, and “metaphysical projections” of the Christian scheme, peculiar to this age and to the second century; all only the attempts of man to penetrate by the mere subtlety of human reason the mysterious doctrine of the cross; which is either never reached, or, if seen, continues as ever “foolishness.”

Take another view. The state of the world, as ignorant of God, is this: “Rejoicing in the works of their own hands” (Acts 7:41). But are there not many whose lives should be a practical testimony against it all, who appear as though their hearts were in it as much as others? It is wisdom to learn

from an enemy; let us hear the testimony of the sharp-sighted world against the inconsistencies of believers.

“As far as we are enabled to discover, they (the serious) testify no reluctance to follow the footsteps of the worldly in the road to wealth; we look in vain for any distinguishing mark in this respect between the two classes of society; that which is ‘of the world,' and that which is ‘not of the world.' All appear to be actuated by the same common impulse to push their fortunes in life; all exhibit the same ardent, enterprising zeal in their respective pursuits.”

Again,

“They live in the common haunts of men, gratify their common desires, engage in their common pursuits, partake of their common indulgencies; they toil along with the worldly through paths beset with temptation in various shapes. They run with all imaginable alacrity and cheerfulness in the race after fame, and honors, and emoluments, where the faith and principles of men are most severely tried; they acquiesce in all the devices of luxury, to pamper the children of prosperity, and manifest the same indifference with others to the cost of human happiness and innocence, at which these may be supplied” (Edinburgh Review).

These answers come from no friend to God's truth; yet they are but too true, and may serve to shame many a professed disciple, who is occupied by “the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things.” We may add one remark in reference to the children of religions parents. In too many instances the same anxiety for placing them in situations which the world counts honorable is manifested as in worldly families; and for this end many a believer will not hesitate to place his child in scenes of temptation, and in circumstances of exposure to evil, where it cannot be expected that the care of the Spirit of God will follow them. The result is, that we believe it will be found in numberless instances that religions parents have been visited with a curse upon their children, just in proportion as they themselves have been involved in the world.

Is there not too little consistent exemplification of the apostle's command, “Let your moderation be known unto all men:” too little proof of our “counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord”? On the contrary, does not the deceitfulness of the heart or carelessness about the Lord's glory lead many to seek by various sophistries to satisfy themselves that the Christian may have fellowship with the world, at least in some things, if not in all? But if there be any truth in every scripture declaration respecting the world, this one thing is certain, that he who argues deliberately how far he may continue in the world proves that his affections are in it altogether. The application of the expression of scripture is often indeed sought to be evaded by the question, What is the world? But is it credible that the Scripture would set forth so pregnant, so critical a principle, enforced by such fearful warnings, and then leave to every man's notions what he was to avoid? The truth is that its language is infinitely more exact than is commonly supposed; and the everyday conversation of men, in their common use of the term “the world,” invariably expresses the thing against which we are warned. But in fact they who ask this question are able full well to answer it themselves. When they speak of rising in the world, of getting credit and a name in it, they know precisely what “the world” means. But when anything is to be given up for Christ's sake, a sudden indistinctness invests everything; and the unfaithful heart is allowed to draw its own line between what is and what is not of the world.

But in all the various appearances which the world assumes, however fair and attractive to the mind and eye, it is exclusively spoken of in Scripture as a thing to be overcome. God has laid down a broad principle, which he who runs may read; and love and faithfulness to Christ alone can be the true guide in applying it. It is judging of things rather by our own thoughts concerning them than by the plain statements of the word of God, which keeps men in it. In truth, the great secret of conformity to the world is taking for granted that things are as they should be. It has been truly said that “there are many saints, but very few Christians:” many who owe to Christ the unspeakable debt of forgiveness through His blood, few who are willing to follow Him Who has so loved them, even to the renunciation of all things. And what was His distinct unqualified testimony against the world? That “the deeds thereof are evil;” and whilst Himself in it, it was simply in witness for God and against them. A disciple could not remain in it, for the call was ever, “Follow Me;” although, like Jesus, he would be habitually there, as far as he was enabled to bring God's testimony to bear upon the consciences of men by his own conversation in the world.

This is the true answer to the question, “How far may we mingle with the world?” As far and as often as we can witness for Jesus. One consideration which at once overrules all others in a Christian's mind is this, that Christ's mission, as regards His people, was for this sole object, “That He might deliver us from this present evil world.” And therefore in pleading for conformity to the world we plead for conformity to that, deliverance from which cost nothing less than the death of the Son of God. The practical question for the believer is, Can I have fellowship with that with which He has none? The example of others is often pleaded; but to our own Master we stand or fall. If many Christians are mingled with it, this only renders it the more imperative on any who see the mischief which is thus occasioned by the church of God to give by their lives a more distinct protest; and thus it becomes not only a matter of faithfulness to God, but of love for the souls of others.

“My meat is to do the will of Him That sent Me, and to finish His work;” “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?” Thus did Jesus speak of His own labor of love; and who that professes to be a follower of Him can set a lower measure for his own life than his Master's, “Who left us an example that we should follow His steps”? Not indeed that he has no natural fellowship with all that charms the senses or the mind of man; but the melody of the songs of heaven is heard above the voice of earthly music, and the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, seen by the eye of faith, outshines the transient spark of earthly splendor. “The time is short.” Most blessed word, whether for the stirring up of our diligence in our Lord's work, that “when He cometh” we may be found doing His will; or for the gladdening of our souls in the prospect of Him Whose coming shall be “as the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth, even a morning without clouds” (2 Sam. 23). Let us try everything that the world holds dear by the glory of that day, by the power and coming of Jesus, by the joy of His saints, in whom He will come to be glorified; and then let our hearts decide whether we are ready to count all as dung, that we may win Christ.

One thing more remains. If we are looking with anything of the mind of Christ upon a world which lies in wickedness, it cannot be with the desire to share in those things which bind down the hearts of those who are deceived by the god of this world: yea which are the very objects that render it so hard even for Christians to leave it; nor in the unfaithful course which temporizes with the evil, but rather in the spirit with which Jesus beheld Jerusalem and wept over it. True love for the souls of

others will lead to a clear and distinct disavowal of all connection with the world, that the testimony may lead those who are involved in it to see their danger. But the charity, falsely so called, of the present day is the most murderous principle of Satan, who first deceives and then destroys.

The days are few and evil; the long-suffering of a God is waiting still, but we know not for how long. May He give us grace to do His work in the “little while.” H. B.

Chapter 53

Conscience

The question may arise, How far grounds of judgment, and so far of reason, enter into conscience; and I answer, Not at all: they go to lead to the estimate of the fact of the relationship, and whether it be violated; and I conclude that the thing is wrong. I then pronounce judgment, not on the thing, but on myself; or another conscience is at work. I call it wrong: but conscience always judges the thing. But there are thus three ideas connected in our mind with conscience, which we must look at if we would not have confusion in our minds: (1) the sense of responsibility to a Being above us, principally to God, not the duty of loving Him (this is law), but authority (this Adam had before the fall); (2) the sense of good and evil; (3) the self-judgment, or repulsion of heart as to others, produced by it when an act is contemplated it condemns. The second, I apprehend, is properly conscience.

Chapter 54

Consecration to God

We stand in all that Christ was to the Father, when He said, “Therefore doth My Father love Me;” we stand in divine acceptableness in Him. Whatever there is of sweetness and excellency in Christ is upon us. Every act of Christ's was in the power of the blood of consecration: His obedience, His service, His walk; and ours should be the same. His devotedness is the standard and measure of our walk with God as His children who believe.

There is no sin-offering before Aaron is anointed, because he typifies Christ; but there is before his sons are anointed, which shows its application to us. We are never to forget that we could not be consecrated to God, if Christ had not died to put away our sin. Still it is not the blood of the sin-offering that is put on the ear, the hand, the foot, as it was when the leper was cleansed; and when putting away defilement was in question. Here consecration is the question, the value of Christ's blood in consecrating us to God, not the aspect of putting away defilement. His death is as necessary for the one as for the other; but consecration to God is here the aspect of it. There must be nothing in our thoughts, acts, or ways, inconsistent with that blood.

The blood and the oil were to be sprinkled on the garments. The death of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost should mark that which appears before the world. The world should be able to recognize that we are devoted to the Lord, though they cannot understand it in its principle and spring. Still it should be visible to men, as it is obligatory before God. Christian practice is the fruit of what we are with God, and flows from it. It is what we are that shows itself in our walk.

All our privileges are the result of our union with Christ. The sons of Aaron and their garments are sprinkled with him. Observe, they were not sprinkled when they had been washed, but when the blood had been applied. The Holy Ghost is not the seal of regeneration, but of the work of Christ.

Aaron's being washed with his sons is like Christ uniting Himself with His people in John's baptism. Aaron was anointed without blood. The Holy Ghost could seal Christ as perfectly accepted in His own person; but to us He is the seal of Christ's work being accepted for us.

In being consecrated for worship, their hands were filled; but with what? Christ in His life and in His death: the one figured in the oiled bread; and the other in the burnt-offering— “the fat.” Every part of the value of Christ is thus put into our hands and offered up before God. It is not only that Christ is ever before God in all His sweet savor, and there for us; but we are to come and present Him afresh in worship—our hands are to be filled with Christ. We cannot go to God without finding Him already in the full delight of grace; still we may bring it afresh before Him. Noah's offering was a sweet savor; and the very reason why God brought judgment on the world is given as the ground for not any more cursing them, now that the offering was accepted, “For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.”

The daily sacrifice was the provision, on God's part, for the sweet savor being always before Him (ver. 38) whether we fail or not in our priestly action. This shows us the meaning of the taking away of the daily sacrifice in Daniel. When the sweet savor was taken away, where was a link with God

left?

Unless we are willing to be consecrated to God, we shall never know the full value of the blood—at least not this aspect of its value. Self-will, however, is not consecration, but the reverse. There will be failure constantly in carrying it out; but there must be the purpose of heart to live wholly to Him, and not at all to self. Verse 43 shows that meeting God is the object; and this marks our title to perfect peace. For if there was one spot of sin left, God could not meet us. If we are brought to God, sin must have been entirely put away; and that according to His estimate of it. For it is God's estimate and not ours; both of the sin and the blood, which gives us our place before Him. “It is God that justifieth.” It is not I that justify myself by my sense of the value of this blood, though I believe His testimony to its efficacy before Him.

Chapter 55

Creation

Creating is a matter of testimony. We cannot really conceive a form existing without a maker, but we cannot conceive “how"; for if we could, it would not be creating. Productive means would exist, corresponding to the capacity of my nature, which is not that of a creator. Ex nihilo nihil fit only expresses the extent of human capacity, both intrinsic and experimental. As the reign of law only applies to the order of what is, what is objectively thinkable cannot apply to creating; which as an idea is not thinkable, though necessary to formal being, which is thinkable or subject to reason. Creation, i.e., what is created, is thinkable; creating is not. The causa causata of schoolmen is law; causa causans is God.

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Chapter 56

The Credentials of Christianity

My dear

Though devoid of claim to argumentative power, I would submit certain considerations, which I pray God may be used of Him to show you that the Christ of the Gospels is indeed the Savior of the world.

You will grant that the world is dark, that with abundant evidence of God's goodness, in His infinitely wise adaptation of external nature to our advantage, yet there is prevailing decay; not to speak of the bitterness and disappointment to which no human breast is ultimately, or indeed for long, a stranger. To my mind, if Christianity be rejected, or regarded as a mere development (which is of course its virtual rejection) in an interminable evolution, the riddle of life is inexplicable. No one would deny that Christianity offers a solution at least worthy of God; and oh, how suited to man!

But before attempting to contemplate some of the positive characteristics of Christianity, I would call your attention to the immense difficulties involved in its rejection, and to the contradictions, so to speak, in which we find ourselves landed. We are loth, in our pride, to own ourselves fallen beings; yet We are tried and agitated by ten thousand cares. We will not own the divine authority and sanction of revelation; yet we are tormented with misgivings, lest after all the Bible may be true. And, by the way, no such misgivings seem to vex the soul of the Buddhist or Mohammedan skeptic. We are alarmed at the approach of death, not so much because of the wrenching of familiar amenities, but because it is “a leap in the dark.” If unfallen beings, why do we not calmly and unquestioningly, when death is near, drop our weary hands, and sleep? Or, again, we try compromise, and set up as Unitarians, proving but half-hearted pleaders, uninspired to risk life or limb in the promotion of our passionless creed. If sure of our ground, why this lack of fervor? Why do nothing at any cost to ourselves? This is not the Christian preacher or confessor.

The reasons of all this are not far to seek. We have all these cares, and fears, and misgivings, because we are fallen beings, whom academic surmises must fail to console. We yearn for something positive; and this Christianity supplies, and like the sun proves itself by lighting our darkness. It is positive; and hence it is the very creed to be preached with ready tongue and gladdened eye to every creature. It throws light upon, and holds out an ultimate solution of, the mystery of pain, which makes up human life. And, looking at it subjectively, in its renewing, transforming power, it carries with it its own credentials, for “He that believeth hath the witness in himself,” and again, “He that doeth His will, shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.” Christianity in short sheds a divine light across my path, which judges me so effectually that I do not think of judging it. It reveals a Divine Person dying to put away sin, and no mere vain ideas and shadowy images, like false religions and philosophies.

But, secondly, the fact that Christianity exists is a most important factor in the question. It exists, and must be reckoned with. How can it be accounted for except as being what it claims to be? It

has done for mankind what no culture has ever done. The value of culture, men say, apart from God is potent. Let us look at ancient Greece, and thence form an estimate of culture. Beautiful and brilliant on the surface, it was horribly corrupt, as we know, beneath. It is forgotten what the darkness was before Christ came.

I would ask doubters to account for the fact, that a great imposture (as they suggest) has been the greatest blessing the world ever had! Many theories have been started to this end, notably those of Strauss and Renan in recent times, the mythical and the romantic. Who believes in them now? And what I must call the puerile theories of the author of “Natural law in the spiritual world” will go the way of all the “vain things” that men “imagine,” either against or in apology for the word of God. But all this ingenuity so far clears the way. Each fantastic bubble bursts, and other interpretations must be invented” by a necessary process of elimination. Will all possible explainings away of the Bible be exhausted in time? I fear not. Old weapons are often refurbished. Alas! the intellect tricks the soul, and thus hides the deformity of the alienated will. Indeed the chief hindrance to the entrance of the truth lies less in the intellect than in the will, though doubtless the head possesses a terrible leverage in preventing the heart from bowing to God.

Lastly, I see in the Man Christ Jesus, the Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, the second Head of our race. Scripture owns but two men: the first man, Adam, fell; the second Man, the last Adam, “restored that which He took not away.” Jesus is “Christus Consummator.” He is also the Head of the church, which is His mystical body, and by His blood He has made—is—propitiation for the whole world. “There is no other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved.” “Ye must be born again,” said the Savior. How peremptory are the “musts” of scripture! But one pathetic “must” indicates the manner of the others. “The Son of Man must be lifted up.” Yet was He the same Who had said, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” What mere man might dare to utter such words? Certainly there is no rest apart from Him. But that there is rest in Him, let the myriads testify who have bowed at the name of JESUS. R. B., JUN.

Chapter 57

Every Family in Heaven and on Earth: Part 1

π■σα πατρι■ ■ν ο■ρανο■ς κα■ ■π■ γ■ς. (Eph. 3:15.)

The blessing of man, and with him of all creation, is to be determined simply by his position before God. Therefore to be without God is to be without hope in the world; and thus every renewed soul proves, in the daily, hourly history of his own little kingdom within, that his blessing is in the favor of the Lord, and that clouds and sorrows arise when that favor is withdrawn or forgotten. As man at first stood on the face of this earth of ours, his blessing was all of this character. He was blest because his whole condition reflected the kindness and love of his Creator. His very constitution was as the image of God, the manifestation of divine perfections and dominion (Gen. 1:27); in the sabbath a standing witness of fellowship between him and his Creator was ordained (Gen. 2:3); over him he had a most gracious Lord, who enjoined on him only a necessary burden (Gen. 2:16); around him he saw a fair creation spread as his own domain, made willingly subject to him in its ten thousand sources of tribute and service, by their great Creator; for, in token of man's lordship of them all, the Lord brought them to him to be named, and whatsoever name Adam gave them the same was the name thereof (Gen. 2:19, see Isa. 40. 26). By his side, to complete the blessedness, he had given him of the Lord a companion fully meet for him, a part of himself—bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh (Gen. 2:22); and thus was his condition perfect and blessed in every relation, showing forth the kindness of God; and he had access to the tree of life to keep it so. But all this state of things was forfeited by transgression—all blessing was gone when the divine favor was withdrawn, when enmity fell out between the righteous God and His offending creature; so did it between the creatures as among themselves. There was no longer the due subjection of the earth to Adam, when Adam had failed in his subjection to God; the earth yielded thorns and thistles to him, as soon as he had brought forth the fruit of a heart revolted from God. And the joys of innocency between the man and the woman were all likewise fled: their nakedness was now their shame, and confidence was changed for covering.

The whole economy of creature-blessedness in paradise, thus presented for a moment, and thus disturbed, was however a mystery; the tabernacle there was, it is true, quickly taken down, but not until we had seen in it the shadows of better things to come.

The purpose of God is not affected by this failure in man. The order of creation, as set in subjection to Adam for the glory of the Lord God, and the union of man with woman taken out of him, and thus made the partner of his name and dignity, is “a great mystery.” We have divinely traced for us in all this, the union of Christ and the church, and the creation put in subjection under Him (see Psa. 8, Eph. 5:23); and we look now for the opening of a happier paradise, for the erection of a second temple, that is never to be taken down, but to continue the blessed witness of the sustaining faithful strength of the Second Man, Who is the Lord from heaven; Who having bruised her enemy under her foot, will go in and out there with His espoused church, made “bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh,” who shall then know the support and comfort of His right hand forever.

The opening heavens do thus, as it were, shine around us in the opening of the book of God; the fellowship of heaven and earth that is there presented, the fellowship of man and the woman, the fellowship of man with the creation around him, shall all be displayed again, and that too in still more blessedness and glory; because of the dignity of the person, and the unspeakable riches and excellency of the work, of Him, in and by Whom all this is to be established. Christ Jesus our Lord is the single-handed power of God to do all this. He alone is the slayer and abolisher of every enmity; the reconciler and fixed center of all this order and fellowship forever; as it is written, “Hereafter shall ye see the heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man” (John 1:51); and again “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He (God) might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him” (Eph. 1:10).

Our Lord Christ who is at once “God over all, blessed forever,” and “Son of man,” “made of a woman,” Who, in the work given Him to do according to the everlasting covenant, descended first into the lower parts of the earth, and then ascended up far above all heavens, has title to “fill all things” (Eph. 4:10): and in Him when He has asserted this His title, “every family in heaven and on earth” is to be gathered. May the Spirit who witnesses to Him, and shows the saints things to come, so trace before us those varied features of His glory, that desiring Him we may ever in Spirit be saying, “Come Lord Jesus!” And let us not be ashamed to own, “that hope long deferred maketh the heart sick,” seeing that we should know no full satisfying joy till we see Him (John 16:22). The Lord Jesus Who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification, and by Whom, through faith in His name, the poor sinner has even now full remission of sins, and access to God as his heavenly Father in full assurance of His love, is known in scripture to sustain the glorious characters, among many other, of King of Israel and Head of the church.

The Jewish nation had constant expectation of Messiah, in the first of these. To the hope connected with Him as King of Israel, the twelve tribes, as the apostle says, instantly serving God day and night, hoped to come. It was therefore simply by such a character that the Jews tried the claims of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus when He spake to them of being lifted up, signifying thereby what death He should die, they said to Him, (John 12:34) “We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth forever; and how sagest Thou the Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?” They had known their Messiah under this title of Son of man, but then it was in connection with a dominion, and glory and kingdom, that should never pass away; for thus had their prophet spoken (Dan. 7:13, 14). But who was this Son of man who was thus “to be lifted up?” And His own apostles, whom He had called and chosen for Himself out of Israel, were thus Jewish in their expectation respecting Him; as appears, I might say, from the whole tenor of their intercourse with the Lord, and particularly from the request of Zebedee's children, and from the apostles, saying, even after He had risen from the dead, “Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6.) Besides, there was equal ignorance in the Jews and the apostles, touching the mystery of “the little while” (John 7:33., 16:16). The difference between them did not rest in any different expectation respecting the Messiah, but rather in their faith or unbelief concerning the truth, that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

And this knowledge of Christ, according to the measure of Jewish hopes even by His own chosen ones, was only “after the flesh” (2 Cor. 5:16); for it linked their expectations with this earth merely. It did not take them out of the system of human affections and associations, or guide them into the

apprehension of any heavenly inheritance in and with Him. For this rests in the revelation of Him as Head of the church, and this character of Messiah is to be known only by the ministry of the Holy Ghost among the saints.

The second character of the Christ, Head of the church, with its resulting power in the church or body mystical, I judge to have been the mystery laid up in the purpose of God, but hid from ages and generations, i.e., not disclosed in former times or by previous dispensations (Rom. 16:25., Eph. 3:5). And there is involved in its very nature, if I may so speak, a necessity for its being thus hidden: for the blessed Lord entered into the character of Head of the church on His entrance into His heavenly glory, and this resulted from Israel's rejection of Him; so that the revelation of the Christ as Head of His body the church has to await the manifestation of Israel's apostasy, and thus could not, by dispensations, have been disclosed till the apostasy was so evidenced. That the Lord's entrance into His present glory in heaven resulted from Israel's apostasy, among other passages, is intimated by His own words in the presence of the great organs of Jewish unbelief, in the day of the power of darkness. When challenged of the elders, chief priests, and scribes, to say whether He were “The Christ the Son of God,” after speaking in terms full of righteous condemnation of them, He convicts as it were the place of judgment, that behold iniquity was there, saying, “If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, or let me go.” He adds, “From henceforth (■π■ το■ ν■ν); shall ye see the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God;” that is, that now was the time of exalting Him to His heavenly glory, since Israel had rejected Him, giving Him no place of glory on earth (Luke 22:68, 69).

The Father has thus made man's wrath to praise Him. The Christ has lost His earthly glory for a season, being the Heir of the vineyard and yet cast out by the vineyard's wicked husbandmen; but the Father has raised the rejected Stone to the highest, and thus prepared larger joys and new honors to await Him in the coming day of the revelation of His glory.

During this present age (while waiting for Him Who has turned away His face in righteous anger from the house of Israel, until He repent and leave a blessing behind Him, Isa. 8:17) the Christ, as Head over all things to His church, is gathering His saints by His word and Spirit. The saints, “whose conversation is in heaven,” who “sit in heavenly places,” by the ministry of the Spirit, shall be brought to their perfect measure, and thus being constituted “the family in heaven,” who are knit together in “the knowledge of the Son of God,” will have their place with the Son in the Father's house; and in His, the Son's, kingdom (Eph. 4:13., Isa. 14:1., Rev. 3:2.1).

This family, ordained for heaven, is already through the Spirit brought into circumstances altogether ultra-Jewish, if I may so speak. They are in the adoption, and not merely in the place of servitude (Gal. 4:1-4); they are even now “blest with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies,” not merely with blessings of the earth. They are in the expectancy of the inheritance of all things with Christ; and not merely becoming the subjects of a kingdom under Him (Rom. 8:17). They are in present conflict not with flesh and blood, or with the nations of the earth, but with spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies, and are taught to hope for final victory over them, and of completely dispossessing them of their present place and power (Eph. 2:2 with 1 Thess. 4:17; see also Rev. 12:10).

When the church is thus complete and Gentile fullness brought in, “all Israel” is to be saved (Rom. 11:26). This present dispensation will have its purpose answered in the taking of the saints into

their place of union in heaven with the Lord their Head, which is the first resurrection. Then the same blessed Lord, Who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in power, and on Whose head are to be “many crowns,” will turn His hand to gather His family on earth, (for the blessings of the earth are Israel's, and all the nations in and through them) in the character of the King of Israel, or, “God of the whole earth” (Isa. 54:5). His glory shall then arise on Zion, and the Gentiles shall come to the light thereof. He shall be set on the earth as God's salvation, to be the glory of His people Israel, and to embrace all the nations within the light of His presence (Luke 2:32). Then shall come the glorious dispensation of the fullness of times, when all things, whether in heaven or on earth, will be gathered together in one, even in Christ (Eph. 1:10). Then shall the fellowship of heaven and earth be restored, and Christ, as the true Jacob's ladder, be the Ruler and Sustainer of it all. Truth shall then spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven. The heavens and the earth, the morning stars and the children of Israel, the angels in the heights, and kings with all people of the earth, shall together praise the name of the Lord (Psa. 148). “His will shall be done in all places of His dominion, and the days of heaven shall be upon the earth” (Deut. 11:21).

The verse which I have selected, as summarily presenting that truth which I am desiring to trace in this paper (Eph. 3:15), has no doubt been commonly read as describing the saints who have departed this life, and are now, as is judged, in heaven; and those who are still in their bodies on the earth. I would be understood fully to grant that there are numbers of God's dear family now disembodied, in heaven, and members of the same family still on earth, and that these are, of course, included in “every family “; but then they cannot assuredly constitute of themselves that family in its wholeness. The family presented in its wholeness must wait for the day when all whom God regards as His are gathered together; and to which this passage in its natural bearing has respect. The purpose of the Holy Ghost in this verse (which may be treated as an adjective parenthesis) is, to tell us that “every family” acknowledges one God and Father, “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ “; thus leaving it for other scriptures to instruct us of whom it is that “every family” is to consist. It is this which, as desiring and praying to be fully subject to those scriptures, I am now aiming to do. May the Lord give us the Spirit of humble worshippers in all our labors.

Every family then, though part is in heaven and part on earth, shall be one, as owning one Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The heavenly branch of it is to be with the Firstborn in the Father's house, His God their God, His Father their Father, His dwelling their dwelling, His inheritance theirs also, the fullness of the Father's love theirs as His (John 17:26., 20:17). “Ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” And the branch of it which is to be found on the earth will be gathered by and into a Father's love also; for the true Solomon, Christ as David's son, the Head of Jewish glory, shall enjoy that ancient promise of His God, “I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son;” and this joy resting in fullness on His head shall circulate among the thousands of His Israel; this oil of gladness shall descend from the beard to the skirts of the Aaron clothing; for Jehovah of old spake of Israel as His son, as His firstborn (Ex. 4:22). So, in this dispensation, believers are made now the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). And the prophet, anticipating the day of Judah's salvation, says of Jerusalem, “This is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness” Jer. 20 13:16).

This leads me, then, to consider what is to be the principle upon which “every family in heaven and on earth” is to be formed. I design, then, to consider the order, or successive acts of Christ by which these branches of the family of God are to be thus formed; and then also the connection

and intercourse that may be maintained among them. Sweet meditations for faith and hope! though knowing but in part, we can but speak or think of these things in part.

As to the principle, by which every family of God is to be formed, it is mere grace—grace setting the saints in heaven, and establishing Israel with the worshipping obedient nations on the earth; grace coming forth from the love of God, to bring us home into the love of the Father. “God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all,” is the apostle's summary of the Lord's dealings with the Gentiles and with Israel, after He had been tracing Israel's rejection for a time, in order to let in “the fullness of the Gentiles,” and in the end to save all Israel; thus showing that mercy should alike rejoice through the gathered and blest families in heaven and on earth. And in the satisfying sense of this, he breaks forth into that note, not of ignorant, but of intelligent admiration, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out” (Rom. 11:33). Here may our souls rest forever; here may we dwell, having our delight therein, the mercy of our God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That grace is the principle of our present salvation, and our future inheritance, of that which is now reserved in heaven for us, is the sweet burthen, I would say, of all the New Testament scriptures, and to which every thought and feeling of the renewed soul must fully consent. I would not, therefore, speak particularly upon it. But that Israel is to come hereafter into the blessing of the earth, simply by grace, may be more carefully traced. Though gradually presented in many parts of scripture, yet it is specifically so in that beautiful scene recorded in Ex. 32-34, which has been already slightly referred to in one of the papers of this publication. I would here shortly refer to another passage (Deut. 29., 30.), as exhibiting the same doctrine.

Moses had just pointed to the people the blessing and the curse that was necessarily appended to their obedience or disobedience (Deut. 28.); when he calls them again to listen further to words of covenant between them and the Lord (29:1). He then recites generally the mercies they had enjoyed at the hand of God from their days in Egypt, telling them however that the Lord had not as yet circumcised their hearts (2-9). He then solemnly places them before the Lord as His people, warning them as he had done before, that disobedience would but cause them to be scattered through the earth, their land to be left a wilderness, and then themselves to become, as it were, a proverb and wonder to the nations of the world (10-29). He proceeds then to further unfold the Lord's covenant with them, showing them that, when they had thus fully entered into the curse of disobedience, if they or the children (for that covenant equally embraced all generations) of them (29:15, 30:2) should repent, then the Lord would have compassion on them and gather them, and circumcise their heart so that they should live forever, and be blest in every work of their hand, in the fruit of their body, of their cattle, and of their land (30:1-10). He then darkly hints to them on what this repentance was to be founded, i.e., faith; for he uses the very same words which the apostle quotes as expressive of the dispensation of faith or grace in opposition to that of law and works (11-14, Rom. 10:6).

This dispensation then, of faith or grace, is that which is hereafter to establish Israel in the blessing of the earth forever, when they repent, or in faith turn to Jesus their Messiah, looking to Him Whom they pierced (Zech. 12:10), and welcoming Him as their King and Deliverer (Matt. 23:39), saying, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” So also in Moses' Song, which follows very

closely upon this (Deut. 32.), we have the same covenant presented. For there, after the prophet had been forewarning his nation of the curse that was to come upon them for their unfaithfulness to Jehovah, he points to the land of the people in the distant future as receiving mercy, and speaks of this as that which was among other things sealed up among God's treasures (32:34-43), as he had before called the grace or mercy of God to Israel God's “secret” (29:29); and it is these sealed treasures of grace, this secret of mercy, that the Spirit largely discloses, and makes known in our dispensation, showing, as He graciously does, “plainly of the Father.”

That grace is thus the fountain of all blessing to Israel, and shall hereafter establish them in the land of their fathers, is presented to us also very strikingly in an event in the life of the patriarch Jacob. When he was returning with his households and flocks out of the land of his exile, his brother's heart was moved against him, and he came forth to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob commits his case into the hands of God, and from Him, in the action of wrestling with the Angel until he had prevailed, he receives a pledge that the mercy he desired should be his. And so it was; the anger that stirred in his brother's heart was quieted, and Jacob passed safely and honorably into the land of his covenant (Gen. 32:24).

Now Jacob in all this stands before us as the type of Israel in the last times, when they shall come forth from their present exile to claim their promised inheritance; and their God and Deliverer shall show Himself in the hour of their need, to still the enemy and avenger, and give them the land of their fathers.

Jacob, Israel's representative, was taught by the Angels touch disjointing the hollow of his thigh, to know that the blessing then pledged to him was all of grace: for that the Angel had not put forth all his strength, but had even allowed himself to be prevailed over; and just as our apostle who was given in like manner and with like purpose, a thorn in the flesh, that he might learn that he was weak in himself, but through grace had all his sufficiency in Jesus (2 Cor. 12:9).

Israel then, as Jacob was, shall be taken through grace into their earthly inheritance, and the church shall, through the same grace be taken into the heavenly glory; and thus mercy alone shall establish every family in heaven and on earth.

I would now beloved (through the mercy of our God, who would have His saints to meditate in His ways, and humbly and yet freely inquire in His temple), seek to trace from scripture what will be the order or procedure of our God when He comes to form His households and to set His every family in heaven and on earth. And what shall we ask Him by the Spirit to give us in this and in all our inquiries? The temper of children who consciously know nothing but through His word and teaching; the mind of friends who delight to use the privilege of friendship by learning his secrets, and claiming confidence: the unshod feet of worshippers ever heedful that the ground is holy. For though whatever things are written, are for our learning; yet are they the things of the blessed God, and we are but the creatures of His band. And oh, for faith to trace these things, and meditate upon them, as though we stood in the presence of them; so that we may enter more and more into the substance of the things hoped for, and be less sensible of the things that are present, whether joyous or sorrowing; having blessed deliverance from their power, through the faith of the things that lie beyond them all.

The blessed Lord Jesus is now ascended up far above all heavens and is seated on the Father's throne, the place of incommunicable glory and majesty. He has gone up on high as a mighty conqueror, and has all power given Him in heaven and on earth. He has gone up on high as a mighty High Priest, to the service of the heavenly temple for us, waiting in sympathy on our infirmities, and being our Advocate with the Father. In these His ascension glories, He is exercising Himself for the completing the full measure and stature of His body the church, until it come to the “perfect man” in Christ. His long delayed return is “salvation, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” And thus His ascension state is not to be the last stage in His wondrous history. The heavens only retain Him until the times of the decreed restitution of all things be come. He then is to come again in like manner as He once went into heaven; as the high priest who once a year went into the holiest, came forth again to meet the people.

Chapter 58

Every Family in Heaven and on Earth: Part 2

Now the order and progress of the Savior's journey of old, back to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and also of His return and entrance into that glory which is still reserved for Him, may be somewhat traced in scripture. And what paths are these to trace!

In passing from the grave to His glory, having broken the bands of death because it was not possible that He should be holden in it, He stayed for a while on this earth, which of old He had given to the children of men. Here He spake with those who were His for forty days, concerning the kingdom of God; showing pledges to them of His constant faithful love, and showing not only that He Who was dead was alive again, but that He was going to glory; the same gracious Master Whose love in the days of His sojourn with them, had been ever so present to comfort and keep them.

In passing upward from them to His seat higher than all heavens, we may trace Him spoiling principalities and powers, the spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places, leading captivity captive, making show of them openly, triumphing over them (it may be in the sight of the elect angels), as the serpent's mighty bruiser, Who had come down to the earth, the house of the strong man, and as the stronger than he, had bound him and spoiled his goods. Then, having accomplished His way back to the highest heavens, He was received of the Father and seated at His own right hand in token of the Father's infinite complacency in Him, and, for His sake, in the saints, for whom He had thus humbled Himself and fought and conquered. “Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool,” was the welcome with which He was then received. Sweet consolation for Him Who had heard the cry from earth, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” The fullness of joy awaited Him there, though here He was crucified. “In thy presence is fullness of joy,” said the Lord anticipating His ascension to the Father.

The season of His return, from this His seat on high, awaits the Father's pleasure, Who has put this in His own power, for the Son has subjected Himself according to the counsels of grace for us; He receives a kingdom and then returns. The present prince of the air, the spiritual wickedness that is now in the heavenly places, ruling the darkness of this world, is to be displaced. Michael and his angels are to fight against the dragon and his angels. Jesus is to descend from “On high” into these lower heavens, and by Michael to prevail, till the great dragon, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, is cast into the earth, and his angels with him, and no place be found for them any more in heaven (Rev. 12:7-9).

The dragon, thus cast out of heaven, comes down with great wrath to the inhabitants of the earth and sea, his persecution being directed especially against Israel, who will then be brought into expectation of their Messiah as heir of David's throne; and thus consequently be witness to Him as heir of the world against the dragon the usurper of it, and the kings of the earth his champions. The dragon's title to the earth is already disproved, as indeed the Lord's right to everything from the grave of death to the throne of the Highest in heaven, has been blessedly manifested by His passing through all these, rising in the execution of Ills mighty work as the descended and

ascended One; but He the rightful heir has not actually assumed His right; and thus the usurper has still power, and throne, and great authority to confer, which he will do until He comes Whose all power is.

And come He will with “ten thousands of His saints,” to smite the kings of the earth, to show Himself as the mighty God, the Kinsman-Redeemer, Who shall deliver the inheritance of the family of God, and fix it in their possession forever.

His action, as the Goel or Redeemer, as appears, will be conducted in the wrath of the Lamb, against the Antichrist and his company, who have despised His grace as the Lamb of God presented to them for the taking away of sin; and in the wrath of the Son (Who as being Son should have been acknowledged to be Heir also) against the kings and judges of the earth who refused to do righteously as for Him, King of kings and Lord of lords, but held themselves as the ministers of iniquity and champions of the usurper (Rev. 6:16., Psa. 11, 12.). The citizens of this world sent after the departing Lord the cry, “We will not have this man to reign over us;” that cry has been echoed through their ranks ever since, and will be kept up until it is answered in righteous wrath. “These mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me” (Luke 19:27). “O my God, make them like a wheel, as the stubble before the wind; as the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire, so persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with Thy storm; fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Thy name, O Lord; let them be confounded and troubled forever; yea let them be put to shame and perish; that men may know that Thou, Whose name alone is Jehovah, art Most High over all the earth” (Psa. 83:13-18). How terrible that such language as this should be righteously taken up on the lips of those who are now beseeching the powers of the earth to be reconciled to this blessed Son! “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling; kiss the Son lest He be angry and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him” (2:10-12). But if the counsel of the Lord be now set at naught, the coming calamity will be laughed at. Blessed, blessed Lord, write all Thy word with Thine own living Spirit on the fleshy tables of our hearts, that we may not in our weakness only speak of these things, but in His power have our life in them, and according to them! It is then that the Lord will awake as out of sleep (Psa. 10:12; 44:23); then will He, to Whom vengeance belongeth, show Himself (Psa. 94:1). He Whose right hand (the emblem of His power) is now folded in His bosom, will then pluck it thence to use it (Psa. 74:10, 11); to use it as the true David for the clearing of the promised inheritance of all the enemies of God and His people; and then for the sitting down as the true Solomon, in the fullness and peace of His kingly honors; His sun rising on the earth as a morning without clouds (2 Sam. 23:4); His light enlightening the Gentiles, and being the glory of His people Israel; the first dominion, the kingdom brought to the daughter of Jerusalem, but the people of the nations flowing into it—the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, being then called the God of the whole earth (Isa. 54:1-5; Psa. 72:8-11; Mic. 4:1-8).

This shall be the gathering of “every family on earth,” the full display of the kingdom, when the will of God shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven, when the days of heaven shall be upon the earth (Deut. 11:21); all bowing their knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and every tongue confessing that the once rejected Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:11).

This order of gathering, first every family in heaven, and then every family on earth, is, as I apprehend, represented in several scriptures, as in Rom. 11, already alluded to, “The fullness of the Gentiles,” preceding the salvation of “all Israel.” I will, however, in addition, only notice the twelfth chapter of John, which very fully and graciously gives us to look at this order of Christ's procedure in taking the heaven and the earth, and gathering His families there.

When the chapter opens, our blessed Lord's paschal sufferings were approaching very slowly. He was on His way to Jerusalem as the place out of which a prophet could not perish. He first reaches Bethany, which lay outside the city, and is there refreshed: and the scene represents us with a lively figure of the Lord in the bosom of His church, as we may draw from the following considerations—

1.—This house in Bethany exhibited a sample of faith in Him as dead and alive again. The anointing His feet, by the loving worshipping Mary, was in token of her faith in His burial and all its blessed wondrous fruit. It expressed her faith in Him as the Holy One of God, Whose body should not see corruption, but that He, the Jesus, Who was about to be crucified, should be anointed, and glorified, and consecrated to a royal priesthood; for this was signified by the ceremonial oil of the law, whose mystical virtues her pot of spikenard would fain rival and set forth. And such is the faith of the church now. She stands as believing in Him Who raised up Jesus from the dead (Rom. 4:24); Who wrought His mighty power in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and dominion (Eph. 1:20); in God Who has exalted Jesus, obedient unto death, and given Him a name, at which every knee in heaven, and earth, and under the earth, should bow (Phil. 2:8-10).

His resurrection-power in the person of Lazarus. “You hath He quickened,” is the word to every member of the church, “who were dead in trespasses and sins.” “If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” And Lazarus, the witness of Christ's resurrection-power is, in this house of blessing, seen seated with the Lord, in token of that full fellowship which the saints are to have with Him, when they sit at His table with Him in His kingdom (Matt. 26:29).

3. This house in Bethany was the place into which the Lord retired. when He was rejected by Israel (see Matt. 21:17; Mark 11:11-19); as the church is the place of His presence, the witness of His grace and power, while Israel remains in unbelief and separation from Him. “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples, and I will wait upon the Lord that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him” (Isa. 8:16, 17; see also Deut. 32:20; Isa. 65:1, 2).

Thus are we given to trace, in this happy household at Bethany, the sure resemblance of the church of God; which the Lord by His Spirit is now gathering, and which is, when brought to its fullness, to constitute the family of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in heaven.

After giving a view of our Lord in the midst of this beloved household, our next chapter presents Him entering into the royal city as Son of David. On this occasion He is attended with crowds of His willing people, triumphantly bidding Him welcome as the King of Israel. All this was illustrative of that day, when, after the fullness of the Gentiles is come in, or the church is perfected in all its members, this same Jesus shall come to Zion, “and all Israel shall be saved “; when He, for whom

as Head His body is now preparing, shall as King of Israel gather His willing people around Him, and reign Himself over the earth the Heir of all its glory.

And when the Lord has thus taken His throne in Jerusalem, the destined center of the whole earth, “the city of the great King,” He will speedily receive the heathen for His inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for His possession; for the Holy One of Israel shall be called the God of the whole earth (Isa. 54:5). The one Lord shall be King over the whole earth (Zech. 14:9). To the Shiloh of Judah shall then be the gathering of the peoples (Gen. 49:10); and the kingdom of the world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Rev. 11:15). And so, as this chapter proceeds, we have a sample of this gathering to Shiloh; for, after His royal entry into Jerusalem, we see our blessed Jesus receiving the willing homage of the Gentiles, who came to worship there, in pledge as: it were of that day when every one shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles (Zech. 14:16; Isa. 66:23): and, when many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts at Jerusalem” (Zech. 8:22).

Then shall every family on earth be collected under the same blessed One as is the Head of every family in heaven, and the promised “greater things” shall then be seen, the union and yet distinctness of heaven and earth, “the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man” (John 1:51).

Thus does this chapter give us a view of the order in which the gatherings of the Lord's households are, as I believe scripture teaches us, to be conducted: the church brought to her fullness, and seated with the Lord at His table in His kingdom; Israel saved—their Kinsman-Redeemer, their Royal Deliverer in their midst, and on His throne in Zion; and then the uttermost parts of the earth taken into possession, and made the worshippers of Him Who is “the desire of all nations” (Hag. 2:7). When these scenes had thus passed in review before Him, the blessed Jesus was wrapt into vision of the day of His glory. “The hour is come,” says He, “that the Son of Man should be glorified” (John 12:23). We shall not however here follow (though of deep and affecting interest to the soul that adheres to Him in love and desire) the course of His thoughts in the, verses that follow. Only we will observe, that He at once recognized the necessity of His previous sufferings; for thus had the prophets testified beforehand, “The sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow” (1 Peter 1:11).

I have been tracing the principle upon which every family of God is to be formed, and the order in which the several branches of it are to be gathered. I would now close with presenting a few hints from scripture of the connection and intercourse that is to be known between every family in heaven and every family on earth, all acknowledging, as they will, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we have many distinct intimations of the character of intercourse which may then be enjoyed between the glorified saints, “the children of the resurrection,” and the subject people of the earth.

Our Lord Himself had fellowship of a very peculiar character with His disciples after He had risen from the dead. He did not dwell among them as one of themselves, as He had done before He suffered: their lodging and their repast was not His, as they had been; but He went in and out among them as it pleased Him or the Father (Acts 10:40, ■δωκεν α■τ■ν ■μφαν■ γεν■σθαι) and, though just the same Master as before, full of the graciousness of First-born among many brethren, yet was He, to their sense, and indeed, in another form. His body had passed through its

change; it was flesh and bones (Luke 24:39), instinct with spirit and not with blood (1 Cor. 10 v. 44); but consistent with His glory. He appeared at pleasure in different forms to His elect; as of old while predestinatively assuming His risen body, He had appeared to Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, and Others (see Luke 24:15; John 20:5-15) And I believe He did then show Himself after His resurrection, in order, among other purposes, to give us to know something of that manner of intercourse that shall pass between the glorified saints, and the restored and sanctified families of man upon the earth.

A passing glimpse we have of the same thing in the bodies of many of the saints arising, after the Lord had risen, and coming out of the graves, and going into the holy city and appearing to many (Matt. 27:53). We have also, as I judge, a gracious sample of this fellowship given to us, at the time when Israel was first brought into covenant with Jehovah, while the blood of sprinkling was still warm and fresh upon them, and before they had done any despite to the mercy of their God, but had rather said, “All that the Lord hath said, will we do and be obedient.” Moses with his train went up to the Lord, “and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in clearness.” Moses alone came near, alone goes into the Mount, but the elders were eye-witnesses of the Majesty of Israel—they stand undismayed in the sight, though not, like Moses, in the midst, of the cloud of glory— “they saw God, and did eat and drink” (Ex. 24); thus shewing the distinction of being in the glory, and outside of it, and yet in some sort in fellowship together.

So, in the holy mount, we have a very sweet exhibition of the same intercourse, and Moses is seen in the same place of glory. The Lord is there with His raised and changed saints Moses and Elias in glory; and His disciples, still as inhabiters of the earth in their bodies of flesh and blood, are brought into nearest view of that glory. The holy Jerusalem having the glory of God, with the Lamb the light thereof, is there, as it were, shown to us; its pearly gates are opened before us, and the nations are seen as walking in the light of it (Rev. 21:24). The disciples were not in the heavens; for as one of them says, the “voice which came from heaven we heard” (2 Peter 1:18); but though they did not enter with Moses and Elias into the cloud of the excellent glory (see Luke 9:34, Gr.), yet they saw it and have spoken of it (2 Peter 1:17). They have testified to us that they have been “eye-witnesses of His Majesty “; as hereafter in the kingdom, the remnant that is saved shall go “to the isles afar off,” saith Jehovah-Jesus, “that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles” (Isa. 66:19). And this distinction of being in the glory, and of only standing in the presence of it, appears to be given to us by the apostle, as the several callings of the church and of Israel (see 2 Cor. 3:12-18). He there anticipates the day when Israel shall turn to the Lord, and the veil shall be taken away; when they shall be able to look on the glory without dismay—that glory into the image of which by the Spirit, the church, like Moses, was to be changed (Phil. 3:21).

In the day when Israel, the unfaithful, is betrothed to the Lord forever, and her land is married, the harmony of all the parts of the redeemed system of the heavens and the earth (having Jehovah in the highest, and beneath, the whole creation which now groans and travels in pain, brought into the liberty of the glory of God's sons), is exhibited by the prophet Hosea, “And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely: and I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea I will

betroth thee unto me in righteousness and judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord; and it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel" (Hos. 2:18-22).

So, Jacob's vision of the ladder, whose foot was set upon the earth, and the top of which reached into heaven, also gives us another image of the same fellowship. The heavens were seen, as it were, shining in their brightness, high above the earth on which the patriarch was resting, but all the while the angels of God were traveling up and down the ladder. So shall the saints, the children of the resurrection, who shall be "as the angels," and shall become sharers of the Son's throne, pass and repass throughout the regions which acknowledge Him the heir of all things; and what less shall the earth then be, than "The gate of heaven?" (Gen. 28:17.)

And I will here further observe, as so taught by the word of God, that when heaven is thus opened upon the earth, hell will be shut; for He Who prevails to take the keys of heaven, and claim it as His throne, and to open it to all believers, Who prevails to take the key of the house of David, and in like manner to claim the earth for His footstool, and to gather His ransomed tribes and worshipping nations there, will likewise prevail to take the key of the bottomless pit and there bind and shut up the dragon. And is it not sweet in the midst of present distraction, to think on the concord of the whole acknowledged creation when thus the offense is taken away when nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain, when "there shall be one Lord and His name One?"

The vision of the glory, which Ezekiel had, appears specially to mark out this harmony throughout all the reign or the government of the Son of Man in His day: the hosts of heaven in their glories, the movements upon earth in their multiplied complexity still obedient to the same Spirit, under the scepter of Him Who will then exercise, as now He has title to, "all power in heaven and in earth" (Ezek. 1). So this harmony is as the temple, which with its holy and most holy place—one for the ark, the other for the footstool of our God (1 Chron. 28:2)—was still one temple. As when Isaiah saw the Lord, He was seated within the veil, but His train filled the temple; the body of the glory in that day shall be in heaven, but its presence shall be known and felt on earth. And oh! what gladness for man then, when, like Jacob, he shall walk on the earth in the blessed consciousness that it is none other than "the gate of heaven!" —the whole earth an extended Bethel!— "The house of God."

Thus it is said, that it is in the manifestation of the sons of God creation shall rejoice: the heavens, where the sons are set, shall shine unhinderedly upon the earth; and the creation, as it were, consciously repose in the light thereof. For all things shall be gathered into one; and though still they be things on earth and things in heaven, yet the earth shall, as it were, touch the skirtings of the heavens, as now, at times, we know not whether it be the clouds of heaven, or the high lands of the earth, that we see in the distant shadowy prospect. Paradise with its tree of life shall be restored, without access for the Serpent; and no tree of knowledge shall be there to put man to proof of his subjection to God; but, instead of it, the priesthood of the King shall be there, witnessing to his subjection in the continued offering of praise to our God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are on the sea, and all that are in them, shall be heard saying, "Blessing, and honor, and glory,

and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever!" "They shall speak," O Jehovah-Jesus, "of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power." "O Lord, our Lord," shall Israel and the nations sing, "how excellent is Thy name in all the earth, Who hast set Thy glory above the heavens," and the heavens shall shout, "Hallelujah." J. G. B.

(Concluded from page 26.)

Chapter 59

Faith or Present Advantage: Abraham and Lot

ABRAHAM AND LOT.—Gen. 19

There is much profitable instruction in tracing, in contrast, the characters of Lot and Abram. Both were saints of God, yet how different as to their walk! how different also as to their personal experiences in regard of peace, joy, and nearness to God! And there is ever this difference between a worldly-minded believer and one, through the grace of God, true-hearted. In the scriptural sense of the term (2 Peter 2:8), a “righteous man,” Lot “was vexing his righteous soul from day to day.” Abram walked before God.

The Lord cannot but be faithful to His people, still He does mark in their path that which is of faith and that which is not of faith, and Lot's trials are the consequences of his unbelief. There is one thing very marked in his course throughout—great uncertainty and obscurity as to his path, and as to the judgment of God, because of not realizing that security in God which would have enabled him to walk straightforward, whilst there is no hesitation in things connected with this world. And it is thus with ourselves if we have not taken Christ for our portion heartily. Abram's was a thoroughly happy life—he had God for his portion.

Lot is seen rather as the companion in the walk of faith of those who have faith, than as one having faith himself and acting in the energy of it. This characterizes his path from the beginning. Therefore, when put to the test, there is only weakness. In how many things do we act with those who have faith, before having it for ourselves! It was thus with the disciples of the Lord, and the moment they were put to the test there was weakness and failure. The soul will not stand, when sifted through temptation, if walking in the light of another.

God's personal call of Abram at the first is mixed with a sort of unbelief in Abram, much like the reply in the Gospel, “Lord, suffer me first to go home and bury my father.” He sets out, but he takes Torah, his father, with him, and goes and lodges in Haran (he could not carry Terah with him into the land of Canaan). Now God had called Abram, but not Torah. He left everything except Terah, and entered into possession of nothing. But he tried to carry something with him which was not of God, and he could not get in. It is not until after Terah's death that he removes into Canaan, where God had called him. (Compare Gen. 12:1 and Acts 7:4.) “So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him..... they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came.”

Lot (though having faith) goes in the path he treads as the companion of Abram. As to actual position, he stands with Abram. He is truly a saint of God, though afterward we find him treading the crooked path of the world's policy.

God blesses them. The land is not able to bear them so that they may dwell together (Gen 13). They have flocks, and herds, and much cattle, and there is not room for them both—they must separate. Circumstances, no matter what (here it is God's blessings), reveal this.

They are in the place of strangers, that is clear (“the Canaanite was then in the land”). They have nothing in possession, “not so much as to put a foot upon;” all rests on their valuing the promises (Heb. 11:9). They have just two things, the altar and the tent. Journeying about, and worshipping God, they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Abram confesses that he is such; he declares plainly that he seeks a country, “wherefore,” we are told, “God is not ashamed to be called” his “God.” (He is never called “the God of Lot.") This acts upon the whole spirit and character of Abram.

The land is not able to bear them that they may dwell together; there is a strife between their herdsmen; they must separate. Abram says, “Is not the whole land before thee? Take what thou wilt, do not let us quarrel. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go the left” —the promise is my portion; I am a thorough stranger, the city of God is open in glory before me. His heart is upon the promises of God, and everything else is as nothing in comparison. It might seem a foolish thing to let Lot choose—to give up to Lot the right to do so is certainly his own; but his heart is elsewhere, his faith was entirely free from earthly advantage.

Not so Lot; he lifts up his eyes—the plain of Jordan is well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord, and he chooses it. There is nothing gross or Wrong in itself in his choosing a well-watered plain, but it just distinctly proves that his whole heart is not set upon the promises of God. Thus is he put to the test; and thus, in the way of the accomplishment of God's purposes, character is displayed. Abram's conduct has for its spring a simplicity of faith which embraces God's promises (Heb. 11:13), and wants nothing besides. Faith can give up. The spirit of a carnal mind takes all it can get. Lot acts upon the present sense of what is pleasant and desirable; why should he not? what harm is there in the plains of Jordan? His heart is not on the promises.

The companion of Abram, he is brought to the level of his own faith.

But he will dwell in the cities of the plain, if he chooses the rivers of the plain. It is not his intention to go into the city, but he will get there step by step. (He must find trouble in the place he has taken pleasure in.) There is not the power of faith to keep him from temptation. Where there is not the faith that keeps the soul on the promises, there is not the faith to keep it out of sin. It is not insincerity, but people's souls are in that condition, and God proves them.

Abram's path all the way through is characterized by personal intimacy with God, constant intercourse with God, visits from God. The Lord comes to him, and explains His purposes, so that he is called the “friend of God” (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23); and this not only as to his own portion, but as to what He is going to do with Sodom—the judgment He is about to bring on Sodom, though personally he has nothing to do with it, and the promise is his hope (Gen. 18). So now He tells His people what He is going do about the world. Though their hope is connected with their own views, with the promises, and the heavenly Canaan, He takes them into His confidence as to what is to happen where they are not to be.

Lot the while is vexing his righteous soul: does he know anything about the purposes of God? Not a word. He is saved, yet so as by fire; though a “righteous soul,” his is a vexed soul, instead of a soul in communion with God—vexed “from day to day” (there is, so far, right-mindedness that it is a vexed soul). He is there before the judgment comes with his soul vexed, whilst happy Abraham

is on the mount holding conversation with God; and when it does come, how does it find Lot? With his soul vexed, and totally unprepared for it, instead of in communion with God about it.

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation,” and He delivers “just Lot.” But whilst thus vexing his righteous soul with their unlawful deeds, the men of the city have a right to say to him, What business have you here? (“this one came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge,” ver. 9). You are quarreling with sin in the place of sin. They have a perfect right to judge thus. All power of testimony is lost by reason of association with the world, when he ought to be witnessing to his total separation from it; there is vexation of spirit, but not power. When Abram got down into Egypt, he had nothing to do but to go right back to the place of the altar he had built at the first. Lot testifies, but he cannot get out of the place he is in; the energy that ought to have thrown him out is neutralized and lost by his getting into it; his daughters have married there; he has ties where his unbelief has led him. It is far more difficult to tread the up-hill road than the down-hill road.

Whenever the counsels of God are revealed to faith, it brings out the spirit of intercession. The word to the prophet, “Make the heart of this people fat” (Isa. 6), at once brings out, “O Lord, how long” So here Abraham pleads with the Lord to spare the city. (But there are not ten—there is not one—righteous man in Sodom, with the exception of Lot.) As regards his own position, he is looking down upon the place of judgment. And in the morning, when the cities are in flames, he finds himself in quietness and peace on the spot where he “stood before the Lord” (ver. 27), not at all in the place where the judgment had come, solemnized indeed by the scene before him, but calm and happy with the Lord.

The Lord sends Lot out of the midst of the overthrow. Angels warn him, and faith makes him listen. But his heart is there still. There are connections that bind him to Sodom, and he would fain take them with him. But you cannot take anything with you for God out of Sodom, you must leave it all behind. The Lord must put the pain where you find the pleasure. “While he yet lingered;” there is hesitation and lingering in the place of judgment, when the judgment has been pronounced; he ought to have left it at once; but the place, and path, and spirit of unbelief, enervate the heart. “The men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters” —the Lord being merciful unto him— “and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.” And now it is, “Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain, escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed” (ver. 17). As for the goods, the sheep, and the much cattle, he must leave them all behind. If the Lord's faithfulness is shown in saving Lot, it is shown also in breaking the links that bind him to the place. His mind is all distraction; he says, “Oh, not so, my Lord. I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die.” He has lost the sense of security in the path of faith. Such is even the consequence of the path of unbelief in a saint of God, he thinks the path of faith the most dangerous path in the world. Lot has become used to the plain, and the mountain (the place where Abraham is enjoying perfect security and peace) is a mountain. The Lord spares Zoar at his request, and lets him flee thither, but on seeing the judgment, he flees to the mountain, forced to take refuge there in the end.

This is an extreme case; we shall find the same thing true in various degrees. Abraham could give up (that sacrifice always belongs to faith); but there are trials to the believer because of unbelief—because he is a believer, but in a wrong place. Lot was a “righteous man;” but when he

did not walk in the path of faith, he had vexation of soul and trouble—a righteous soul, but where a righteous soul ought not to be. Observe his incapacity simply to follow the Lord. Observe also his uncertainty. So will it be with us, if we are walking in the path of unbelief, there will be trouble which is not our proper portion, but which comes upon us because we are in a wrong worldly place, the trial that belongs to unbelief. We may be seeking the compassion of the church of God, when we are only suffering, like Lot, the fruit of our own unbelief. The simple path of faith has been departed from, because we have not learned to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Giving up is our proper position, simple sacrifice, in the knowledge and present consciousness that “all things are ours.” But the promise is “a hundredfold more in this present world,” and that is not vexation of spirit.

J. N. D.

Chapter 60

The Father Manifested and Glorified: Part 1

The more we search into the words of Jesus, the more we see how entirely it is a new thing that He is setting up, on the ground of the redemption He had accomplished.

“I have glorified Thee upon the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do; and now, O Father, glorify Thou Me.” We see how, while the divine nature of the Lord Jesus shines out upon every page of this Gospel, not only doctrinally, but in a thousand things when the eye is opened to see it, yet He never goes out of His place as Man, the place He had taken in order to fulfill the Father's will. It was the very thing Satan above all wanted Him to do; he tried in the wilderness to make Him leave it when he said, “Command that these stones be made bread.” Act from your own will; don't stay in the place of a servant. Christ would not listen for a moment, and says, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” He had taken the place of a servant, and being in that place He never went out and never will go out of it. Therefore He does not say, “Now I will glorify Myself,” but, “glorify Thou Me;” yet it was “with the glory I had with Thee before the world was.” Thus, while we see His title to the divine glory, at the same time He never leaves the place of lowliness and humiliation He took. He could speak of “the Son of man which is in heaven,” and yet walk about the earth as one that served; He came down to death, but He “gave up” His spirit. We see God shining through the humanity of Jesus, and it is the joy and blessedness of the saint who has eyes to see (for He came in a shape in which I can see Him), that He was down here a man amongst men; but it is God Whom I see” there!

We see God's power manifested in creation, but we see nothing of His heart there. But when God is manifest in the flesh, we get all His perfect grace and goodness.

There are both sides, and if I lose either, I lose everything. If He is only a man—well, I see blessed grace and beauty in Him; but there is only a Man Who is so much better than myself that He could have nothing to say to me. If He is only God, a little bit of His glory terrifies me; but we have divine love serving, and the more we contemplate it, the more blessed we shall be.

There is another thing. We cannot eat of the bread of God, the true manna come down from heaven, unless we first eat His flesh and drink His blood—unless we come by His death. We may be attracted by His grace, the Spirit showing it and drawing the heart, as with the poor woman who was a sinner; the grace that was in Him attracted her heart, and she goes into the house. She had seen divine goodness and love so completely above all the evil in love and holiness, that He could bend down to all the evil (not allowing it of course).

We have a revelation of God in the Lord Jesus. He comes down to us where we are in our sins, but it would be nothing if it were not He Who comes down; for I should say, “I have seen blessedness and holiness, but I cannot stand before it.” We must remember that love never gave up holiness. But there was this blessed testimony to a love which never gave them up, and could bend down to sinners and come to them; “for God commendeth His love to ward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” He never says, “Come unto me” until He had come in

perfect grace and holiness to them. But the moment He had thus come, He presents a blessed Object to attract the heart: the blessed Son of God come down to the place of sinners and of sin; and there is nothing like that and never will be!

It is the one thing in which everything centers; all the purposes and counsels of God are made good in that. “I have glorified Thee upon the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.” The Son of God is exalted in consequence of what He has done: He has finished the work and glorified God as He never could have been glorified except for sin. This may sound strange; but what was in the heart of God never could have been shown out in any other way, as it has been shown at the cross. He displayed His power in creation; but when I come to the case of sinners, all that God is in goodness, grace, and patience, comes out as it could not have done with an innocent man.

All that is most blessed is unfolded when good and evil come out, and this to a meeting-point. Satan's and man's hatred found its complete utterance; it was shown in a fall and final way in the rejection of the blessed Son of God come in love. Every possible detail in which evil could be shown—treachery, base abandonment where love had been, injustice in the judge who should have defended the innocent, in the priests, who should have pleaded for weakness, pleading against Him. Everything man ought not to be was shown out then; man's enmity definitely proved when God was there in love, and in the blessed perfect manifestation of what man ought to be in obedience.

All that God was in love met all that man was in sin, when Christ was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5). For creation could not glorify God. What has creation to do with sin except that it has been spoiled by it? Thus, sin having come in, God was dishonored in the creature of His delight; and the blessed Lord Who had God's glory perfectly at heart puts Himself forward—is made sin for us; and the righteousness of God goes out against sin.

God was there manifesting such unspeakable love as could not have been manifested except for sin, and at the same time fully establishing His righteousness and glory. The cross was the pivot on which turned all that went on in the counsels of God before the world, and that will be in the new heavens and new earth hereafter.

We cannot sit and contemplate the blessedness of the life of Christ unless we first come in by the death of Christ. Am I not a sinner? And do I sit down and say, I am competent to estimate all that beauty and blessedness? What! with my stupid debased mind? No, if I come in truth I must come as a sinner; and then I find the grace that suits a sinner. I must meet Him in the grace that suits my need, or I must meet Him in His glory when He comes to take vengeance on them that know not God.

But when I have gone into the holiest of all through the rent veil, then I can turn on God's side of the cross, and look back at all that it was to Him, and all that His life was in leading up to it; and thus I can eat the manna, after I have eaten His flesh and drank His blood. It is impossible that a sinner can come with a divine mind, and meditate upon all His perfect divine mind upon earth, unless he first come through the cross. There is no truth else. How can I talk about contemplating God till I know His mercy? But when I go through the veil and am at peace, perfectly reconciled to God, not a question about me left, not with the spirit of bondage, but with the Spirit of

adoption—when I make my own what He has said, “I go to My Father, and your Father, to My God and your God” —then, being at perfect peace with God, and seated in Him in the heavenlies by counsels of divine love, I can turn back and look at what that offering was by which I have come, and see its intrinsic value. It is of infinite value! He could say, “Therefore doth My Father love Me.” All our thoughts are poverty itself; but there is that blessed aspect of Christ to the soul; and I can sit down and adore and worship.

A young Christian has got forgiveness and he is full of his happiness; he is thinking about himself. No one can come in any other way: we would most strongly insist upon that. The first thing is to get washed. But we may see the character of what is meant in a very simple way. For, coming about his own sins, one measures God's grace and goodness and our comfort and blessing, by the fact that Christ has met all those sins. But when I have come and am in perfect rest, then I can sit down and feed on Him, eat that Bread come down from heaven, what I shall eat forever and ever! It is blessed to see in the sacrifices how this is always kept in view. In the peace-offering the fat was burned; it was the Lord's part. The priests (all Christians) eat the flesh of the sacrifice, and the people who were invited eat it; that is, they entered into the blessedness that it was to God.

We get in these sacrifices the difference brought out. In the sin-offering, something wrong had been done; and they had to bring their offering; but it was not a sweet savor. The blood was carried within the veil, but the beast was burned without the camp.

Note here, the sin and trespass offerings are directly in connection with our responsibility. Christ crucified bore the sins which we have committed. But there is another thing—not only what we have done, but that our hearts should also feel where we were. It is not only, “What hast thou done?” but as God said to Adam, “Where art thou?” Where was he? Away from God and getting away from Him if he could! This is the dreadful thing. He had sinned; but it was far more to be away from God, “without God in the world,” as “there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” by and by.

That is where man is.

We are not in paradise; where then are we? The first great wickedness of Cain was that he did not know he was away from God. He was so utterly far from God that he never found it out! He had not the sense that he was totally gone from God; he thought he could just worship Him and offer the fruit of his toil as if nothing had happened; for he did not enter one atom into the thoughts of God.

It is a picture, not of the open rejection of God in an outward way, but of the utter dreadful insensibility of the human heart as to where we are. Abel recognized that he was outside, and that Another must make atonement; he owned where he was. The one came as if there was nothing the matter, nothing gone wrong; the other recognized that he must have an atonement, or he could not come at all.

The condition of man was definitely brought out at the cross of Christ. “If one died for all, then were all dead” —dead in trespasses and sins; and, if so, there must be a new creation. “The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.”

The first man is cast out of paradise, and he is insensible; but now Christ, the second Man, has entered into a far better paradise, and we are brought in with Him. “To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” The second Man is gone up into it, and we are made heirs with Christ—members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

When looking at the wondrous glory of the church of God, if we would have these blessed truths really and solidly in our hearts, we must rest thoroughly upon the foundations. Can I look up and say that it is all mine, joint-heir with Christ, member of His body, one spirit with the Lord? that I am given to enter into the joy of my Lord? that when He shall appear, I shall be like Him? To enable us to hold the thought of these blessings, not only as scriptural statements, but in health in the soul, we must enter into the truth of Christ having come in grace where we were, and then we see that it could not have been otherwise.

When I see the blessed Son of God going down as man into death, that glory is then seen to be the natural consequence. I do not get this till I see Him bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; and this makes it not a more matter of head-knowledge, but one which calls forth the adoration of our hearts.

J. N. D.

Chapter 61

The Father Manifested and Glorified: Part 2

(John 17)

The burnt-offering was not for sin, and yet it would not have been there except on account of sin. Christ offered Himself without spot to God, and by the grace of God He tasted death for every man. Thus we see Him made sin: He gives Himself for it. And then we find another dreadful thing—He drank the cup of wrath due to me. We find Him going down into the place where there was no patience! God has patience towards us; He is long-suffering toward us; but there no long-suffering, no patience could be. He was made sin: no hiding or covering up of sin there, He brought it right into the very presence of God, Who was dealing with sin, and His cry upon the cross was, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” In Psa. 22 He speaks of all the external troubles, but then He says, “Be not Thou far from Me” —the very thing He was!

We find Him taking this place, bearing our sins; but again look at the other side. “Now is the Son of man glorified.” It was in man that all the glory of God was made good, not merely the divine judging of sin that we should not be judged, but the ground laid according to the glory of God for man to be in the glory of God—a totally new thing!

It does not follow in itself that one must be in the glory because he is forgiven; but here we find the blessed Son of God takes this place before God as man, tasting death, offering Himself without spot; the One Who knew no sin presents Himself, the spotless Lamb of God, not only to bear my sins, but to be made sin, and thus to glorify God. How wonderful that in man this should be done!

Everything that God is was in question, and He does not say, “I have borne the sins of My disciples,” but “I have glorified Thee.”

How could God have glory where sin was, where everything was corrupt, where Satan had got the upper hand? Well, Christ puts Himself there and takes all the sin and all its consequences, and therein He glorifies God; and now all the counsels of God can be accomplished, and Christ takes the glory as the fruit of His work. “I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me.”

We see His perfect life through the testing of God in the meat-offering, and nothing but a sweet savor comes forth; but when I come to the burnt-offering, death is there. Christ comes in and glorifies God in the place of sin and death; and then we see death destroyed, the power of Satan broken, judgment gone; and, as the result of this, Man takes His place with God!

The first man, once innocent, brought in sin, was conquered by Satan, failed in every way, and dishonored God. But before judgment comes, the second Man brings the triumph of Satan to a close. He comes here, and in this very place was made sin, and all that was in God was perfectly glorified in that place of sin and death and judgment; and now all the counsels of God come out, which could not have been before.

God had been dealing with man on the ground of his responsibility. The more we look, the more we see God setting man up in goodness and righteousness, and man always failing. Adam ate the forbidden fruit; Noah, brought out unto the new earth, got drunk; Israel worshipped the golden calf; the priests offered strange fire on the first day of their office; Solomon loved strange women; Nebuchadnezzar, when government was committed to him, exalts himself and casts the three children into the fiery furnace. The first thing which man does with that which God gives him is always to spoil it. It was the same thing with the church also: “all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.” This is what we find man is! But One Man comes; and in the very place where all this was true, and ripened out to its full extent of evil, He is made sin Who knew no sin; He stands before God in that character: all is dealt with, and a foundation laid which nothing can shake

It is a precious thing to have some little sense of what Christ was doing. Fathom it of course we never can. Not only are my sins put away, but Christ had God's glory perfectly at heart; and that, now this is fully established, it comes out that what God had at heart, before the foundation of the world, was to have man with Himself in glory. His delight was with the sons of men; and what does He do? He puts them in the same place as His own Son: they are sons, and they have the glory with Him. He has finished the work and gone into the glory; and this gives the Christian's place.

He will come again in glory; and we have complete association with Him. “We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

“If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straight way glorify Him.” It is the next thing. He will not wait till the kingdom is set up. The disciples saw His glory in the mount, but they did not see inside the cloud from whence came the Father's voice.

The union of the church with Christ was never revealed until the foundation was laid, and then God says, “I am able to do this in virtue of what Christ has done, and I will have you perfectly with Myself.”

Christ was not merely the sin-offering, but a whole burnt-offering, in order that God might be perfectly glorified. The Man who has done this is in glory, and that is the way I get in!

“I have manifested Thy name onto the men whom Thou gavest Me.” The whole of this chapter speaks of the Father's name: it is not the Almighty, Jehovah, or Most High as He will be known in the millennium— “Most High, possessor of heaven and earth;” but it is the Father, putting us in the place of sons.

People very little realize this when they talk of “our Father,” and say, “Thy kingdom come.” What is the Father's kingdom? People do not notice words: it is astonishing how our wretched hearts glide over scripture as if it were ice!

He is Almighty, yet this name does not save; He is Jehovah, yet this name does not save; but if the Father sent the Son, it is that I might live through Him, and that He might make propitiation for sins. It was that the world through Him might be saved. This is salvation, as it is eternal life; and the Holy Ghost is shed in virtue of the precious blood of Christ, giving us association with Himself, making us sons as Christ is the Son: we are “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.”

He says, “I have manifested Thy name.” We find He had been doing this throughout this Gospel: “The only-begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” But they as yet, dull and ignorant, not having the Holy Ghost, could not recognize it; they had not the Spirit of adoption whereby they could enter into it.

See chapter 16:29, 30. He had been telling them that the Father had sent Him; but they do not understand a word of it, and only say, “By this we know that Thou tamest forth from God.” And, we often see the same thing now in those who have not the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: the name of Father is not known.

I do desire that, while our hearts get peace through seeing Him made sin for us, we might also see what He was for God in the place of sin.

We are not only forgiven and cleansed, but we stand in the whole value of that work of which Christ could say, “Therefore doth My Father love Me.” The act itself so infinitely glorified God that He could give it as a motive for the Father's love to Him.

“Holy Father, keep through Thine own name them that Thou hast given Me.” He puts them in the place of sons, and looks to the Father to keep them according to that Name.

The world had no part in that: men must have life to be sons; they must be born of God.

He puts us into the present consciousness of the place into which His sacrifice has brought us, that is, His own place in all its blessedness: the veil rent, the heavens opened to us, sealed and anointed by the Father, owned by Him as His sons. When He was here as Man, at His baptism the heavens were opened, He was sealed and anointed, and the Father owned Him as His Son (and this is the first time that the Trinity was fully revealed); and then He goes to be tempted. He takes the blessedness of the place with God, and stood in that place as a man, and then goes into the conflict like us.

Look at Phil. 2:14, 16. Take this sentence, and word by word it is a statement of what Christ was. We are in a wicked generation—exactly what Christ was; sons—what He was; light in the world as He was the Light of the world; holding forth the word of life as He was the Word. Take it word by word, and we are in it all! He puts us into His place before the Father, and gives us His place of testimony before the world.

“That they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.” How does He bring that about? You get this Man upon earth, the Son of man, and the Father talking with Him in all the delight He had in Him Who says, “Whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.”

Are our hearts taking this place? Where was His spring of delight and joy and blessing? In His Father. And have you anything of the joy of Christ fulfilled in your hearts?

You may tell me your thoughts are weak and poor; and I am sure they are; our hearts answer miserably to all this love. But that is where He has brought me, and placed me; that is what is in His heart, if I cannot trust my own! But while we see all the glory before us—going to be in the glory of God, our souls should look and search into the foundation it is all built upon. If you have already forgiveness, the Lord give you to see what you are as belonging to the Father's love and house.

If we see how completely He has glorified God, so that glory for Himself and for us too with Him is the natural and necessary result, it must surely humble us, but it brings in adoration. I cannot look without adoration at the Lord Jesus going down in grace into such a place, forgetting self in the presence of such wondrous grace. And it keeps the heart subdued also.

The Lord give us to have Him before our hearts and eyes, that we may be occupied with Him and satisfied with Him, and that in some measure we may walk like Him through the words which He has given us. J. N. D.

Chapter 62

God's Ways in Training His Own for His Service and Testimony .1

From the German of Worte der Wahrheit in Liebe." CHAP. I.

TWO ESSENTIAL REQUISITES FOR EVERY LABORER IN THE WORK OF THE LORD.

It is a well-known truth confirmed by daily experience, that "justification by faith," and "peace with God," are not one and the same thing, nor do they take place at the same time, though the latter is the consequence of the former. As soon as one believes, he is safe and justified before God, but it may be some time before the soul enjoys settled peace with God.

It is dangerous for one who has no real solid peace with God, to be engaged in the service of the Lord and the testimony of divine truth, for he is apt, though unintentionally, to preach or teach what he has not experienced in his own soul. And where the conscience has not been purged and set free, and is not kept sweet in the presence of God, an unbroken will generally manifests itself. Such have then, sooner or later, to pass through bone- and heartbreaking experience in the school of God—in the "belly of the fish," as it were—to learn practically the terrible nature and effects of sin, of self-will and of the desperately wicked heart; and then, when human help and deliverance appear impossible, to throw themselves, like Jacob, upon the Lord, and exclaim, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me!"

There are then two essential requisites for practical fitness and usefulness in the work of the Lord for every believer, especially such whom the Lord will use for His work and testimony. These are:

1. A broken will;

2. A broken heart.

True it is, that every Christian has to make a lifelong humbling experience of the existence and activity of his own will, and of his own evil heart. But it is no less true, that there is a time in the life of every true Christian, where our all-gracious and all-wise God with His mighty hand, in the school of deep trials, breaks our natural will to pieces, that we may learn to say in truth, "Not my will be done, but Thine," when we shall find, that His hand is as tender as it is mighty.

Every day's experience, even in common life, bears testimony to the necessity of the perverse natural will being kept in with bit and bridle. A young horse, which has not been in due time broken in, will be of no use to its master.

With our will unbroken, we are unable to discern and to prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, whether as to the practical difficulties of daily life, or as to His work and service. As the fog conceals the sun, so our own will hides from us the will of God. But if in the school of deep trials and sorrows, often alas! caused by our self-will, we have learned to judge our evil, foolish, and perverse will, and to abhor it, we shall be able "to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." As with the will, so with the heart. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." And why? Because it "is desperately wicked," and "deceitful above all things."

None but a fool would trust a wicked man, or believe one who is a thorough deceiver.

In your heart do you confide?

God's heart from yourself you hide.

But when our heart with its perverse or idolatrous inclinations, lusts, designs, and plans, has been broken practically, God can reveal unto us His own heart of grace, love, and tender sympathy. In this world of sin and sorrow there is a saying that such and such have “died of a broken heart.” But God teaches us to “live with a broken heart,” aye, and live very happy with it too. A broken will enables us to serve the Lord, but a broken heart makes us serve Him “after His own heart,” —in spirit and in truth.

Jonah, courageous servant of God though he was, had not yet learned to deny himself, his own will and judgment—to be dependent upon God alone. He was thinking of his own position, his own importance, of his own dignity and character as a prophet, forgetting that he was God's prophet. No sooner does he receive a commandment from God, the carrying out of which, in his opinion, might possibly impair the dignified character of his prophetic ministry, then he goes his own way and attempts to “flee from the presence of the Lord.” But the Lord soon showed him the folly of such an attempt, and Jonah had to learn some crushing lessons, two of them in the belly of the fish at the bottom of the sea, the third under the gourd.

Our meditations on this most instructive little portion of holy writ, therefore, naturally divide themselves into two parts—

1. What Jonah learned in the fish's belly;

2. What he learned under the gourd.

Before entering upon the first part of our meditations, I would direct the attention of the reader to the various characters of the instruments employed by the Lord, to train and fit each one for His service. What a difference between the mighty storm and the sultry, silent, east wind; between the huge fish and the little worm and the gourd! Further, what a difference of the scenes! In the first chapter the deafening roar of the tempest, and the howling uproar of the elements; in the second chapter the silence of the grave in the belly of the fish at the bottom of the sea. Then again, in the third chapter the immense fluctuation, turmoil, cruising and traffic of the capital of the ancient world, compared with the quiet rural scene under the gourd, on the east of Nineveh, presented in the fourth chapter. What contrasts! Jehovah “hurled the storm on the sea,” He “prepared the great fish “; He “prepared the gourd” (or “Palmchrist tree”). It was He again that “prepared the worm,” and He “prepared the sultry (or silent) east wind.” How different these agents and links in the chain of Divine Providence! Yet they must all work together for Jonah's good.

How much more does this hold good for us, Christian reader? “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to purpose.” Blessed be His great and glorious name!

I. WHAT JONAH LEARNED IN THE FISH'S BELLY.

CHAP. II.—Jonah during the Storm.

The first two chapters of the Book of Jonah teach us two all-important truths. In the first we learn, that there is no place, however likely for escape, where God's arm cannot reach us. The second chapter shows us, that there is no prison, however unlikely for escape, from which God's hand cannot deliver us. What place more suitable for escape than the wide endless sea? If the criminal wants to escape from the hands of justice, he embarks for some distant country. God knows how to overtake thee, fugitive, who, Jonah-like, desirest to go thine own way, and to “flee from the presence of the Lord.”

And where in this world could a prison be found from whence escape appears to be more impossible than the fish's belly at the bottom of the sea? Do not despair, prisoner. To God it is but a small thing to deliver thee from the strongest prison, as soon as it seems good to Him, and He has accomplished His purpose in placing thee there.

Perhaps some might say that Jonah, as the Lord's prophet, ought to have been too intelligent, and God-fearing, to make the vain attempt to flee from the Lord's presence. Let us not deal too hardly with the prophet. Have not we like him attempted to go westward, when God has told us to go eastward? Jonah was a prophet of God; but are we not children of God, greater than Jonah, yea, greater than John, the forerunner of the Lord? (Matt. 11:11). And have we not had to experience to our sorrow and shame, how vain such attempts are, but also how near is God's hand in deliverance to those who call on Him out of the prison of self-inflicted distress, as soon as we, in the fish's belly, had learned the lesson God was teaching us there? Alas! how often have we followed, like Jonah, the promptings of our natural will, forgetting that truth so important for the practical life of faith, as expressed in Psa. 139, and which written by David nearly 150 years before Jonah, must surely have been known to, if now forgotten by, him. Let as turn to the first half of that instructive Psalm.

1” O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me.

2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,

Thou understandest my thought afar off.

3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down,

And art acquainted with all my ways.

4 For there is not a word in my tongue,

But, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether.

5 Thou has beset me behind and before,

And laid Thine hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;

It is high, I cannot attain unto it.

7 Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?

Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there;

If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning,

And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there shall Thy hand lead me,

And Thy right hand shall hold me.

11 “If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me

Even the night shall be light about me.

12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee;

But the night shineth as the day:

The darkness and the night are both alike to Thee.”

It was just these searching truths which Jonah practically forgot, when trying to “flee from the presence of the Lord.”

God, Who willeth not that a sinner should die in his sins but repent and live, had commanded His prophet to go to Nineveh with a message of warning from the wrath to come, Nineveh was then the first and greatest city of the world, before Babylon rose into prominence. Its vices and wickedness had attained such a height, that it had “come up” before God.

It is a solemn truth, reader, that sin has a voice, which cries to heaven for God's righteous retribution. The word of God, both in the Old Testament and in the New, confirms it. God says to Cain, “What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground.” God then pronounces judgment upon Cain. To Abraham the Lord said, “Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know.” Further, in the New Testament, “Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth” (James 5:4).

In the same way the cry of Nineveh's wickedness had “come up” before God, and He had commissioned His prophet with a message of gracious warning to that city. But how did the messenger entrusted with such a gracious charge receive it? He little thought of the weal or woe of those millions of sinners at Nineveh, for whose reproof and salvation that message had been designed. His first thought is of his own position, and whether the consequences of that message might not contribute to impugn his character as a prophet of God. In the end (Jonah 4) he himself unwittingly betrays his selfish thoughts that led him into disobedience in the foolish attempt to flee from the presence of the Lord. He appears to have reasoned somewhat thus, “God must have gracious intentions toward Nineveh, in charging me with this message of warning. And in thus sending me to them, Jehovah, no doubt, will invest my words with divine power in conviction, and the Ninevites will turn from their evil works and repent. God then on His part will repent of the

judgment announced to them by me, His prophet. I know that He is a gracious and pitiful God, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteth Himself of the evil (chap. iv. 2). He will pardon the city, and I, Jonah, Jehovah's prophet, shall be exposed as a lying prophet, the judgment announced by me, not having been carried out. Has not Jehovah Himself spoken by Moses thus, 'But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him.'"

The temptation in Jonah's case was not small; but where was his faith? where his trust in God, and the single eye and heart in simple obedience of faith? Was not God, Who had charged Jonah with the announcement of judgment upon Nineveh, able to take care of the character of His prophet? When the judgment, announced by Jonah, did not take place on account of the repentance of the Ninevites, did they consider Jonah to be a false prophet? Not so. They were but too glad and thankful, that they had been pardoned and spared.

Oh what a wretched and mischievous thing is “self,” wherever it lifts up its ugly head, especially in the Lord's work and service! Rather let Nineveh perish with its millions of souls, than the personal character and ministry and position of a prophet of God be impugned! Alas! worse than this, rather let the flock of God, for whom the good Shepherd died, be scattered to the winds and become a prey to wolves, who do not spare the flock, than a distinguished luminary in the church confess, that he in some important church matter has made a mistake. The history of the church down to the most recent days bears testimony to the sorrowful fruits of such unjudged selfishness, selfwill, and pride in some, who were looked up to as servants of the blessed Lord, Who is meek and lowly of heart. Oh, may we “in the crushing sense of our nothingness,” learn to be small before Him, Who is the great “I am” in God's presence; once the lowliest of all servants, taking the lowest place upon the earth, and therefore exalted to the right hand of God, from whence He will appear as “Lord of lords and King of kings,” to judge this world! May we learn better to understand His ways and to enter upon them! “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not hither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

Was not Jonah's errand a proof of it? Let us now return to him. God had told Jonah to go to the east, to Nineveh, with that solemn yet gracious message. But Jonah goes just the opposite way. He goes to the west, to Joppa, taking ship for Tarshish to “flee from the presence of the Lord.” Thrice in our chapter (as thrice also in the first) does the Holy Spirit make mention of the prophet's vain attempt to flee from the presence of the Lord, as if to point out the folly of such an attempt.

The town of Joppa has in this sense a very instructive significance. Two servants of the Lord, the one a prophet and the other an apostle, went to that place. Both were entrusted by God with a

message to the Gentiles; the prophet of the Old Testament with a warning message of judgment, and the apostle of the New with a message of salvation, grace and peace through Jesus Christ. The prophet went to Joppa in disobedience to the will of God, but the apostle under the guidance of the Spirit. Both of them had in their gracious Master's school to be trained for their service. Hard were the lessons which each of the two had to learn, but those destined for the prophet were the hardest by far, for in his case it was not the consequence of mere ignorance, but of willful disobedience. Peter, on the roof of the house of Simon the tanner, learned by the vessel descending from heaven, like a great sheet knit at the four corners, an all-important lesson from heaven, before he left Joppa for Caesarea, to convey to the first fruits of the Gentiles the heavenly message of peace through Jesus Christ. But for Jonah two much harder though blessed lessons were reserved, which he had to learn at the bottom of the sea in the belly of the fish, after he in disobedience had sailed from Joppa to “flee from the presence of the Lord.” What lessons! How different in their character and locality, and yet so rich in grace and blessing in their intentions and results!

“None can hinder what He will;

Wait and trust in Him, be still;

Go the way which He doth send thee,

Sure and blessed will the end be.”

(To be continued.)

Chapter 63

God's Ways in Training His Own for His Service and Testimony .2

The storm sent by God now broke out. It must have been of extraordinary violence, for “the ship was like to be broken.” Even the mariners, accustomed to storms, were frightened and “cast forth the wares that were in the ship, into the sea, to lighten it of them, and cried every man unto his god.”

But where was Jonah? “Gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.” Amidst the storm, when everyone, from the captain down to the cabin boy, is wide awake and astir, the prophet lies fast asleep. And why? His conscience began to awake, and he wanted to sleep it off, and he succeeded. Alas! how deep is the torpor of a conscience lulled to sleep by Satan, the world, and the flesh, be it the conscience of a saint, who has departed from the path of obedience, walking in willful disobedience, or that of a backslider. Only in the latter case his sleep is heavier and deeper and generally of longer duration. That solemn warning of the apostle in his Epistle to the Ephesians (chap. v. 14), is addressed to believers, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

Solemn words these, addressed to Christians, careless Christians! They resemble a man who has laid himself to sleep in a deadhouse among corpses. What a situation to be in! Who but a madman, or a drunkard, would think of laying down to sleep in a deadhouse! The first part of the above solemn call is, “Awake thou that sleepest!

So it was with Jonah. The Gentile captain of the ship must come and rouse him from his sleep with these words, “What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.” What mortifying words addressed by an unconverted man of the world, as happens sometimes, when collaring a Christian out of his sleep? Can there be anything more humbling for a child of God? Alas, to how many a Christian, who has left the path of obedience, to walk in self-will and worldliness, has that solemn call been addressed, “Awake thou that sleepest!”

But like the sluggard, who when roused in the morning, only turns himself upon his side, and soon is faster asleep than before, so have you, poor Christian worldling (what a contradiction in terms!), when half roused from your perilous sleep, but relapsed into a deeper one. You have heeded only the first part of that awakening call, regardless of the second, “Arise from the dead!” Your unwilling ear did not listen to this second clause, and you have relapsed into sleep and slept even faster than before in company of the “dead,” amidst whom you have made your bed.

This reminds me of a most affecting account I read some time ago of the death of a little girl about eight years old. On passing one evening a cemetery she perceived through the railings some pretty flowers on some of the graves. She wanted to take a few of them. The gate being open, she entered and picked them, but in taking them she was caught by the sexton. Several graves having been lately despoiled of their floral ornaments, for whose preservation the sexton was responsible, the wretched man determined this time to inflict exemplary punishment. He seized the poor crying

little maid, and dragged her into the deadhouse, where several dead bodies were lying, and locked her in, intending to leave her there for an hour. He then returned to his work. Being very busy that evening, and having several calls to attend to, he returned home late, and worn out and tired soon went to sleep, having entirely forgotten his prisoner in the deadhouse. In the morning he suddenly bethought himself of the poor victim of his cruelty. Terrified he hastened to the deadhouse and opened the door. But what a sight presented itself to the wretched man! The number of the dead bodies had increased by one! Cowering down in the farthest corner sat the poor little maid—dead. Her lovely childish little face was distorted with terror. In her lap lay still the small nosegay, culled from the grave. The cold, the atmosphere of death and corruption, and above all the fright at the presence of the corpses, had soon put an end to her young existence. When the inhuman perpetrator of that barbarous deed was taken to prison, the numerous police were scarce able to prevent his being lynched by the furious crowd.

I have not mentioned this terrible incident, to produce a sensational impression upon the Christian readers of these pages, which would be neither profitable nor edifying for them. But should there be even one amongst them who has practically forgotten the purification of his sins, and gone to sleep in the deadhouse of the world, perhaps the sad incident mentioned above may be to him a serious warning in its proper application. Poor, thrice unhappy, worldly-minded child of God! You are in a far more terrible position than the poor little maid just spoken of. She knew but too well in what place and company she was—in the deadhouse amongst corpses. But you scarcely appear to be conscious that you are in the same place and company, only spiritually, which certainly does not improve either the place or the company. She felt the terrible atmosphere of death and corruption in that dead-house! But to you, that pestilential savor of death, stifling the spiritual life, has become your natural atmosphere. She, poor little captive, felt the darkness of that terrible night there without a morning. The silence of death was awful to her, and the least noise in that chamber of the dead would have frightened her still more, unless it had been the noise of approaching footsteps without. Oh, how the poor little captive at such a sound would have sped towards the door, calling out for deliverance. And if the door had been opened, would she have delayed a moment longer in her terrible prison? No; with winged steps she would have fled from the pestiferous cage of death into the fresh open air, thanking God for her deliverance from that terrible abode.

But you, poor unhappy strayer from the grace of God and of His Christ, have settled down in this world, where everything bears the stamp of sin and death, and made your bed with the “dead in trespasses and sins.” Instead of going into the world, whither the Lord has sent you, as the Father sent Him into it, a faithful witness of the truth, and carrying with you the savor of the gospel of life and peace for your fellowmen, you have embarked with the world, whose friendship is enmity against God, in the way of disobedience. You have forgotten that the cross of Christ which has removed every barrier between God and you, ought to be an everlasting barrier between the world and you, the world being by it crucified unto you, and you unto the world. Like Jonah you have gone into the sides of the ship to sleep off the storm—the trouble of your conscience. Beware, Christian worldling! God does not always send an outward storm, as in the case of Jonah. Do not close your ears and heart to the voice of God, which not only “is mighty upon the waters,” but speaks mightily to the conscience and heart, by His Spirit and word, lest you should fare like some of those at Corinth, who, from their spiritual sleep fell into the sleep of death. It is indeed “far better

to depart and to be with Christ," but it is sad, very sad, to "fall in the wilderness" by God's chastening hand. To be called home in such a way, cut off like a barren fruitless branch, is a sad way of going home.

"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and. Christ shall give thee light." That is, awake, rise and open the shutters of your dark chamber of death-like sleep, that the sun may shine in, and Christ give you light. And should there be in your heart some secret idol-chamber—be it love of money, or worldliness, or something else which has slipped in between Christ and you, and taken His place in your heart—open the door and let the light of Christ and His word shine in and expose the idol in all its hideousness, and in the morning light of our good Shepherd's restoring grace, Dagon's stump and members will be seen scattered about. Your eye being light again and single, set on Christ, your whole body will be light, and your heart shall bask in the sunshine of the love of the Father and of the Son, in the power of His Spirit no longer grieved, Who glorifies Christ, receives of His and shows it unto us.

It was not so with Jonah. The storm and the Gentile shipmaster had shaken him out of his sleep, but his conscience had not yet been fully roused. For this something more was needed. Even these Gentile mariners appear to have recognized the extraordinary character of that storm. They felt that a higher hand was here at work, to reach some unknown sinner sheltered by them. They therefore cast lots to learn for whose sake that disastrous tempest had come upon them. Instead of finding an Achan in the camp, we have a Jonah in the ship. And as in the former case, so here the lot fell upon the right man—Jonah. Now his conscience, as well as his body, is fully awake. At the question, "Tell us, we pray thee, for whose sake this evil is upon us? What is thine occupation, and whence comest thou? What is thy country, and of what people art thou?" he answers, "I am an Hebrew; and I fear Jehovah, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land," and confesses to them his sinful and vain endeavor to flee from the presence of the Lord. Even the Gentile mariners see the folly of Jonah's attempt to flee from the presence of his God, and the prophet has to listen to the humbling question, "Why hast thou done this?"

But God's purpose had not yet been reached by the prophet's confession, wrung from him by the convicting lot. Jonah must be sent to his destination in the belly of the fish at the bottom of the sea, there to learn in God's house of correction, what God would teach him. The storm of the sea continued to rage, and the terrified mariners ask Jonah, "What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm onto us?" Jonah now submitted to the mighty hand of God. Whatever may have been his other personal shortcomings, he was no coward. He tells them, "Take me up and cast me forth into the sea, so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

We now come to a lovely feature of these Gentile mariners. Although they owed to Jonah all their trouble and distress, and even the loss of the whole cargo, as well as their evident jeopardy, they nevertheless hesitate till the last moment to avail themselves of the only means, indicated by the prophet himself, of saving them, by throwing Jonah overboard. "Nevertheless they rowed hard to bring the ship to the land."

How many Christian mariners in the ecclesiastical barge might take a leaf from the book of these rough Gentile sailors, in cases where there is—we do not say, an Achan in the camp, but—a Jonah in the ship! Hear we not in such cases but too often the cry, "Overboard with him?" "Let us

throw him into the sea, that the sea may be calm unto us" is, when translated into church language, "Let us excommunicate him, that we may be no longer troubled." Such oarsmen will flatter themselves in vain with the hope that, after Jonah's ejection from the ship, the sea will be calm unto them. Generally just the opposite will occur; nay, it often happens, that not the one who was believed to be the "Jonah in the ship," but one or some of these unhesitating mariners get somehow into the fish's belly, and to the bottom of the sea, in order to learn there the lessons which they had thought to be reserved for Jonah.

These honest and gracious Gentile mariners endeavored, if possible, to save Jonah, and the ship, and themselves. But their efforts, however well-meant, were in vain. God's wise, holy, and gracious will and purpose as to His prophet must be accomplished. But these mariners—we can hardly call them any longer unconverted—did not proceed with the execution of the prophet's own behest, till they had bowed down before Jehovah for what they were about to do to His prophet. How beautiful and instructive is their short prayer: "We beseech Thee, Jehovah, we beseech Thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for Thou, Jehovah, path done as it pleased Thee." They then take Jonah and throw him into the sea. Immediately the storm ceases, and the sea becomes calm. "Then the men feared Jehovah exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto Jehovah, and made vows." The "voice of the Lord upon the waters" had not only spoken to Jonah, but also to the Gentile mariners, who, like the Thessalonians of a later day, "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God." They were thus a type of the Gentiles, who, after the tempest of "Jacob's trouble" is over, shall turn to God.

"Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

But before entering upon the next chapter, let us pause a few moments to consider One greater than Jonah, even Jesus—likewise "during the storm."

(Continued from page 166.)

Chapter 64

God's Ways in Training His Own for His Service and Testimony .3

What a different scene have we here! Not a prophet, who thinks of his own authority rather than of the warning and salvation of his fellow-men, hastening towards judgment and perdition, and who, daring the storm brought on by his disobedience, lays himself and his conscience to sleep. How different is the portion of the gospel referred to above, which describes in an especial way the perfect and uninterrupted service 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!” We behold here the greatest of all prophets, of whom Moses testified, the God-man Jesus Christ, Who had left His heavenly glory, the home of every blessing, to exchange it for this world, the home of sin, misery, death, and judgment, to warn rebellious sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and to show them the only way of salvation through faith in Rim, Who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” and without Whom “no man cometh unto the Father.”

Another day of His indefatigable service of love in the path of obedience and righteousness approached its end. He (Whose works were so many that, “if they should be written every one,” His bosom disciple, who most likely knew most about them, could but add, “I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written,") had bidden His disciples to cross to the other side of the lake. The multitude surrounding Him is dismissed, and the boat with its precious freight quits the shore. But Satan, “the prince of the power of the air,” also knew of the contents of that little vessel. He would try whether he could sink the fragile little craft, with its cargo so obnoxious to him. For that this storm, so unlike that sent by God in Jonah's case, came not from God, but from Satan, with God's permission (for the glory of His Son, and the sifting of the disciples), appears plain to me, as I hope to show further on.

What a difference between these two storms! In the former, a self-willed servant of God, fast asleep in indifference amidst the tempest caused by his disobedience; here, the obedient Son of God, Whose “meat” it was to do the will of Him who had sent Him, and to do His work. The lowliest and most willing of all servants, amidst the raging storm, sleeping on a pillow in the hinder part of the ship, whilst the furious billows, lashed by the storm, strike the fragile barge, enter and fill it, threatening every moment to send it to the bottom. But in that little ship there was One greater than Jonah. He slept “the sleep of the Just.” Here it is not the reasonable apprehension of a heathen shipmaster rousing the indifferent prophet from his sleep, but the selfish unbelief of the disciples, who thinking only of their own danger, with harsh reproach and rude hand, awake their gracious Master from His well-deserved sleep! Little were they mindful at that moment of Who it was, sleeping so calmly and peacefully amidst the storm, in the hinder part of the ship! How could their boat, were it ever so fragile, sink and they be drowned, with such a Pilot, who was none other than the Greater of heaven and earth, the Son of the living God! Peter had owned Him as such, but how sadly he had forgotten it at that moment. “Master, carest Thou not that we perish?” What words, addressed to such a Master!

As to courage of faith, the prophet Jonah was far superior to them, though his eyes had not seen what theirs had seen, nor his ears heard what theirs had heard. Jonah had bidden the mariners to cast him into the sea for doubtless he believed that God, Who had sent him with such a message to Nineveh, was able to deliver him again from the watery grave, to accomplish his mission, after he should have learned what God would teach him. But though Jonah was superior in that respect to the Lord's disciples in the little boat, how incomparably inferior in true grace, meekness, and lowliness, was he to their Master and his, Who placed him into the depths of the sea in the fish's belly, and then again deposited him on the safe shore!

That gracious Master, aroused from His sleep in so rough a manner, now arose in His quiet majesty and power, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, “Peace, be still.” And the wind and the waves are calm, as savage dogs lie down at the bidding of their master. These words of the Lord appear to show clearly that this storm came not from God, but had been brought about by Satan, for in the former case

Jesus would not have rebuked the wind. The cause as well as the intent why this storm was sent appears to be just the opposite to Jonah's case.

“And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it ye have no faith?” The gracious Master does not begin with rebuking His disciples, as we most likely should have done in a similar case. He first rebukes the winds, then His disciples. First He removes the cause of their unbelief, then He reproves their unbelief: first grace, then truth. He dwelt among them full of grace and truth. So it ought to be with us.

“And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, “what manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” Now at last they seem to become conscious again of Who it was that had slept so calmly in the hinder part of the ship, though they had daily heard His mighty words and works.

Christian reader! Do we not but too much resemble those disciples in the ship? Like them we enjoy the peace after the storm, after the Lord, through His wondrous and gracious intervention, has once more strengthened and rebuked our little faith. But where is our peace during the storm? What do we know of the “peace of Christ ruling in our hearts?” (Col. 3:15). What do we know of that peace of which the Lord spoke before He left this world to enter, through the sufferings of the cross, into glory, there to prepare a place for us? How much do we know of this peace amidst the storms of opposition in a hostile world—a peace of which the life of Jesus on earth was the perfect expression? (Psa. 16:8-11, Acts 2:25-28). May the Lord in His infinite grace keep and establish us in this, “His peace,” in days of general earthquake, without and within, when in every sphere of life, be it religious, political, social, commercial or scientific, the storms of scarcely controllable human passions are raging around us, so that it almost seems as if the prince and god of this world had the aim, by overthrowing every divine and human foundation and order, to hurry on professing Christendom with increasing celerity towards open apostasy.

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

A beautiful example of such a peace, daring the storm, we behold in the demeanor of the apostle Paul on his voyage to Rome. He, like Jonah, was to go to the capital of the Gentiles with a

message of warning and of mercy. He also, like Jonah, had gone his own way, i.e., to Jerusalem, but not from the same selfish motive (though not excusable on that account). He also found himself, so to speak, in the fish's belly, to be prepared for his mission to Rome, as Jonah for his to Nineveh. I shall enter more fully upon this later on.

(Continued from page 181.)

Chapter 65

God's Ways in Training His Own for His Service and Testimony .4

CHAP. 4. JONAH IN THE FISH'S BELLY.

We are accustomed to the well-known expression, “Jonah in the whale's belly;” but the Hebrew text makes no mention either of a whale or a shark, speaking only of a “great fish.” It was in all probability a miraculous fish, the same as with the miraculous tree in the last chapter. The skeptic and the rationalist, who possess no insight into the word of God except through their scientific spectacles, and whose faith does not go beyond their telescopes and microscopes, object that there is no fish existing with a mouth large enough to swallow a man As if God, Who created the world out of nothing, could not have prepared a fish large enough to swallow Jonah! “Jehovah prepared” [not “sent “] the miraculous fish. It was even a fish which God had “prepared,” we are assured, especially for the occasion, as He did the miraculous tree in the last chapter.

How foolish are the wise men of this world, who say, “Science must shed its light upon the Bible!” They resemble a man who holds up a candle towards the sun, to see whether the sun is shining or not, or a blind mole on the top of his molehill with a pair of spectacles on, and holding an open book, to read it through his spectacles. The famous geologist, Sir Chas. Lyell, had to confess, that in his geological calculations, he had made a mistake of several thousand years. Yet man presumes to make the light of “science, falsely so-called,” such as geology or astronomy, the measure of the truth of the word of God! How far wiser was the simple expression of that poor illiterate woman who said, “If it were written that Jonah swallowed the whale, instead of the whale swallowing Jonah, I should believe it, simply because it was written.” These are words that may elicit the pitiful smile of the skeptic and the rationalist; yet they are but the expression of the simple faith of a true believer, whose mind and thoughts have been brought into captivity to the Ascended, and therefore to the “written” Christ, that is to the word of God and its infallible authority. Such an one says, “I believe, therefore I see;” whereas unbelief says, “I see, therefore I believe.”

I will mention here another of these objections of blind unbelief, which presumes to discover discrepancies and incongruities in that divine book, where faith perceives perfect harmony. These enlightened “friends of light” (“Lichtfreunde"), as they call themselves: on the Continent, say, “It is written in the Bible that the Son of man shall be three days and three nights in the belly of the earth, even as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish. But Jesus was in the grave from Friday evening until Sunday morning, that is scarcely more than one day and two nights. How are we to reconcile such an evident incongruity?”

Here, as usually, when attempting to contest the truth of Holy Writ, the “friend of light” only betrays his dark ignorance, not only in divine things, but even in matters of simple history. For it is a well known fact, that according to the Jewish way of reckoning, any part of the day—the beginning or its close—counted for twenty-four hours. The body of our Lord was laid in the grave on Friday afternoon before six o'clock (the beginning of the sabbath); which according to the Jewish recording counted for one day and one night. Daring the whole of the following night and day (the

sabbath) His body rested in the grave, which was the second day and the second night. And on the third (Sunday) early in the morning He arose, which makes the third day and the third night. None of the Jewish Rabbis, the inveterate enemies of the second part of Holy Writ, and its constant assailants, have ever dared to raise that objection to its truth, as in doing so they would have betrayed their ignorance. It was reserved for modern skeptics (i.e.," seers"), rationalists and "divines," thus to expose their ignorance in divine matters and the irrationalism of their infidelity.

But from the follies of men we return to the profitable and divine instructions contained in the second chapter of our prophet.

What a contrast to the tumultuous tempest of the preceding chapter do we find in the silent tomb of the second! There it was the mighty voice of God in the howling storm and the roaring waves, mixed with the cries of the distressed mariners, whilst the prophet was lying in his selfish and unconcerned sleep. But here, we have the stillness of death at the bottom of the sea, and the prophet entombed in the belly of the fish, not asleep but fully aroused in his conscience, to learn those two all-important truths, which God then and there would teach him far away from the eyes of men. From the deep silent grave the prayer of the prophet and his "cry out of the depths" ascend to God. His prayer somewhat reminds us of that of king Hezekiah (Isa. 38), when death was announced to him, only that in Jonah's case the conflict of soul was much deeper, being at the same time, it seems to me, a prophetic expression of the deep exercise of soul of the future Jewish remnant at the time of antichrist (like Daniel's friends in the fiery furnace), as expressed in the well-known 130th Psalm.

God had cast His disobedient prophet "into the deep," into the midst (lit. "heart") of the sea: the "floods compassed him about," God's "waves and billows passed over him" who was buried alive. From the silent deep the voice of the distressed prophet went up to God's ear, "I am cast out of Thy sight!"

But mark, Christian reader, what follows. Does God's servant abandon his hope in God? If ever there was a hopeless situation, it was here. Does the prophet give himself up to despair, and lie down for the sleep of death? No. The same gracious but holy God, who had transferred his prophet into the solitude of that unique grave, not to kill him, but to render him, through deep exercise of soul, more fitted for His service, knew also how to strengthen the faith of His apparently cast-away servant, and to fill his heart with confidence in His mercy. Such are His wonderful ways and doings of old and now, in the Old and in the New Testament. The same voice which exclaims in deepest distress, "I am cast out of Thy sight," continues in the same breath, so to speak, "Yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple."

Could the prophet in the belly of the fish look toward the temple of God at Jerusalem? Daniel though far away from the place of that city, could open his window towards Jerusalem, and turn his face in the direction of the distant place, where once Jehovah's temple had been. But how could Jonah's eyes, in the belly of the fish at the bottom of the sea, have been able to find out the direction of the spot, where at that time the holy city with its glorious temple was still standing? The answer is very simple. The prophet's eye of faith was no doubt looking from the depth of his prison and of his distress straight upwards to a higher temple, to God's sanctuary. He "lifted up his eyes to the hills," from whence alone his help could come and did come. He expected his help from the Lord, "who has made heaven and earth," as he had confessed Him before the mariners. The

waters compassed him about, “even to the soul. The depth closed him round about,” and “the weeds were wrapped about his head.” He had gone “down to the bottoms of the mountains,” and “the earth with her bars” appeared to be “around him forever.” Jonah's “soul fainted within” him and was well nigh giving way to hopeless despair.

Then Jonah “remembered the Lord.” His prayer went up and “came in onto Him, into His holy temple.” God, Who at a later period bade death and corruption to recede from the sick-bed of the godly king Hezekiah when sick unto death; and He who at a still later period, during His humiliation on earth, called forth His friend Lazarus from the bonds of death and corruption, was able to preserve Jonah's life from the same, and bring him forth again into daylight out of his deep grave. And He did so. God hears the prayer of faith, which addresses itself straight to Him, throwing aside every human prop. The eye of faith looks from everything off unto Jesus, to run in patience the race set before us. And as the needle, whilst trembling from the motions of the ship, ever turns towards the pole, so the heart of the true Christian turns to Christ, however it may appear to be moved and wavering under the pressure of daily circumstances. The believer's heart knows but one direction for its movements and aspirations, one refuge only, whither it turns for light and counsel and comfort and help, even God and His dear Son Jesus Christ our Lord (Pss. 46., 70.-Comp. Acts 4:24-31; 16:25; Rev. 8:3-5).

But two great truths Jonah had to learn in the fish's belly, before God could deliver him from the prison of his living tomb. These two truths, all-important for us as for Jonah, we hope to consider, if the Lord will, in the next chapter.

God's Ways in Training His Own for His Service and Testimony .5

CHAP. 5. Two THINGS Learned IN THE FISH'S BELLY.

Two important lessons Jonah learned in the fish's belly at the bottom of the sea—

1. “They that observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercy;” and

2. “Salvation is of the Lord.”

What is the vainest and most delusive of all vanities and delusions? Is it the world around us with lying vanities and vain glories? That was not it which Jonah had to learn; for we may well assume that to God's prophet the world's vanities were too well known for him to observe or regard them. No, the most deceptive of all lying vanities we have not to seek in the outer world, but within ourselves. Our natural heart is that most deceptive of all “lying vanities;” for “deceitful above all things is the heart, and desperately wicked:” who knows it? It is the natural heart with its cunning Jacob's places and designs for the satisfaction of its wretched selfishness and self-conceit.

Jonah, amidst the constant claims of his prophetic office, always being occupied with others and his position towards them, had not allowed himself sufficient time to learn, in contemplative solitude, alone with God, and in the light of His presence, the insidious depths of his own evil heart, or he would not have suffered himself to be led away in the vain attempt “to flee from the Lord's presence,” and would not have found himself in the fish's belly. This truth, so hard for us to learn, Jacob had learned after a lifelong humbling experience. Jonah had to learn it at the bottom of the sea, where he had the “sentence of death in himself,” that he “might not trust in himself, but in God which raiseth the death.” He had to make the same experience as the apostle Paul afterward, though not in the higher and deeper Christian measure of the latter. But even to a servant of God like Paul, the apostle of glory, that lesson could not be spared. Paul, unlike Jonah, made it at first on “terra firma” in Asia (2 Cor. 1:8), but later on, like the prophet, in the depth of the sea, on his journey to Rome. He, too, had preferred his own way, though not from the same selfish motive as Jonah. He had gone to Jerusalem instead of to Rome. Therefore the Lord put the chain upon his flesh, and he went to Rome a prisoner, though that circumstance, corrective to the flesh as it was, did not in the least detract from his honorable character as a “prisoner in the Lord.” But during that terrible storm Paul no doubt had the “sentence of death” in himself, as he had before in Asia, that he might not trust in himself, but in God, Who raises the dead. He like us, had to spend a second time a season “in the fish's belly,” to learn more thoroughly that which he had learned before, i.e., to renounce his own will, however fair his motives might appear, and commit himself entirely and solely to the will of God, and to His grace in quickening and delivering power. And his prayer, like that of Jonah, came up into God's “holy temple.” Not only he himself, but two hundred and seventy-five souls were delivered “from the fish's belly,” so to speak, and safely deposited on the shore, though not so gently as was Jonah.

Paul, like Jonah, had wrestled with the Lord in fervent prayer, though his conflict of soul was very different from Jonah's in the belly of the fish. The “peace of Christ” was with the apostle during that

terrible hurricane—that peace which is the result of true humiliation and broken self-will and of the heart before the Lord, as was the case with Paul. And never was that quiet superiority of the Lord's true servant in the greatest dangers more strikingly manifested than in the demeanor of the great apostle during that terrific tempest, when for several days neither the sun nor the stars did appear, and all human hope had disappeared. The apostle was in fact the captain both of the ship and of the soldiers. Unto all he gave counsel and encouragement, everybody following his directions.

But, as with Jonah, and even with the apostle, so with every one of us, the having “the sentence of death in ourselves” must be experienced, before that victorious triumphant certainty of faith in the quickening power of God can become our happy practical portion, and render us superior to surrounding difficulties. It is not enough to sing

“Created things, though pleasant,

Now bear to us death's stamp.”

It is a very different thing to “have the sentence of death in ourselves.” This we find in the apostle in the first chapter (2 Corinthians). Hence we see in each of the following chapters an increasing sense of the quickening power of God and the life of Christ, until in the fifth chapter it culminates in those words, “that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”

Sooner or later, every one of us has, like Jonah, to spend a season “in the belly of the fish” (often even several seasons), to learn, like him, that hard and yet so important truth, viz., that “they that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.” There is no greater vanity than our wretched self, our naturally deceitful and desperately wicked heart, which always resists the grace and mercy of God towards us or towards others, as was the case with Jonah; mercy—that tender compassionate, divine pity—which never fails to take up those who fear God, and in the consciousness of their own helplessness and weakness make Him their only refuge. But to him, who trusts, like whilom Jacob, in his own plans and schemes and strength, God says, My mercy is for such as are helpless. My wisdom is for those that have become fools in themselves. He takes up those who have “failed in business,” i.e., have become bankrupt in themselves and their own undertakings. But they who have become wise like those Corinthians, and strong and enterprising like Jacob, “are in need of nothing,” as Laodicea, and therefore need neither the pity nor the mercy of God, which is reserved for Philadelphia's “weakness.” To such God says, Go your own way and see whither it will lead you.

“I dwell in the high and holy place, with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

How true it is, that they who trust in “lying vanities,” that is, in their own righteousness, their own character, their own wisdom, strength, and designs, forsake their own grace (as to their inward need), and their own mercies (as to their outward need). Only the grace of our Lord is able to keep and strengthen our inward man, as His power keeps and protects us outwardly. (Compare 2 Tim. 2; 1 Peter 1:5; 4:19; Jude 24, 25.) The Lord grant us all a deeper, a more constant sense of our entire dependence upon His grace and power, in order that we, in our passage through a cruel and subtle enemy's country towards eternal rest and glory with Christ, quietly and immovably amidst the excitements and commotions of these days, may steadily advance towards the glorious goal of our pilgrimage, in the calm and happy consciousness that for us also Christ's grace is

sufficient, and His strength is made perfect in weakness.

But there was another no less important truth, which Jonah had to learn in his prison, before he could be delivered from it—a truth, closely connected with the former, viz., that “Salvation is of the Lord.” On the surface of the sea, during the mighty storm sent by God, Jonah might learn to fear the Lord and own Him as the God of heaven, Who “made the sea and the dry land.” But the great truth, that “Salvation is of the Lord,” had to be learned by him in the depths of the sea, when he had the sentence of death in himself, and, deprived of every human help, had learned that great truth, that they who observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. As soon as Jonah thoroughly had learned that lesson, the second (viz., that salvation is of the Lord) was learned as a matter of course.

When the Israelites had arrived at the Red Sea, with Pharaoh's horsemen and chariots behind, and the Red Sea before them, and every human way of deliverance cut off, then only, for the first time, the words were heard, “Fear not; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show unto you.” Only when the converted but legal man in Rom. 7, in the “belly of the fish” has entirely come to naught as to his own strength, crying out in despair, “Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?” does he perceive that salvation and deliverance must come from the Lord, and exclaim, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord?”

Upon the cry of distress in chap. 14. of Exodus follows the glorious triumphal song in chap. 15. This is divine order.

So it was with Jonah. No sooner had he learned that “they that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy,” and that “salvation is of the Lord,” than “Jehovah spoke to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.”

How different this vomiting out of Jonah from the “spuing out” of Laodicea, which said, “I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” and knew not that she was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked! The prophet was out of the mouth of the fish vomited upon the shore of safety, but Laodicea will be spued out of the mouth of the Lord for judgment.

May God keep us in mercy from that self-sufficient and therefore lukewarm spirit of Laodicea! As many as He loves He rebukes and chastens, even in the “belly of the fish,” if necessary!

Chapter 67

God's Ways in Training His Own for His Service and Testimony .6

Let us now turn again for a few moments from Jonah to Him Who was greater than Jonah, but in immeasurably deeper waters than he. We have considered, in contrast to Jonah, Jesus during the storm in His immovable peace, majesty, and power, and at the same time His loving and tender care for His own. He, the “faithful witness” and “image of the invisible God,” Who had made known to sin benighted men God's heart full of love and grace, whilst His life at the same time had been the perfect pattern and expression of what man ought to be in obedience towards God, had now arrived at the end of His short and perfect earthly career. The world, which was made by Him, had not known Him, and His own had not received Him. Israel's and man's trial generally was about to be closed forever at the cross, surrounded by Jew and Gentile in common conspiracy. God, “manifested in the flesh,” had been here on earth in Christ, “reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing trespasses.” But the world would not be reconciled unto God, and Judah's builders rejected the precious foundation stone which God had laid in Zion (Isa. 28 Peter 2). “They hated Him without a cause,” and His gracious invitation, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” drew from the hearts of His people no other response but “Crucify Him!” The bitterest enemies, such as Pilate and Herod, were reconciled to each other, and became friends on the day of His rejection and crucifixion. The world refused to be reconciled to God by the life of the gracious God-Man, spreading blessings wherever He went. The obedient Son of the Father, Who had power to lay down His life, and power to take it again, was now about to crown His obedience in life by His obedience in death, even the death of the cross, that He might, by His death, reconcile hostile sinners to God by believing in that divine love manifested on the cross, where man showed his love for sin and his hatred against God, and where God showed His hatred against sin and His love for the sinner; to overcome, by divine love, the enmity of man, and make sinners believing exclaim

“Nay, but I yield, I yield, I can hold out no more;

I sink, by dying love compelled, and own Thee Conqueror."

Deep indeed were those waters whither the prophet Jonah was sent, when “the waters compassed him about, even to the soul, and the depth closed him round about, and the weeds were wrapped about his head.” But deeper, incomparably deeper, were those waters of death into which the obedient Son of God went down for our disobedience. “Deep called unto deep at the voice of God's waterspouts;” when not only the waters of death were beneath and around Him, but all the waves and billows of God's wrath went over Him.

Wondrous and past finding out are the depths of the counsels of divine wisdom and love and grace and glory. Who can fathom them? But who can say which was deeper, the wisdom of those counsels, or those sufferings on the cross which it required to make good and accomplish them, even the sufferings of Him Who, when dying upon the cross, bowed His head with the crown of thorns, and said, “It is finished!”

Great was Jonah's distress of soul when he, in his living tomb, deprived of all human help, “out of the belly of Sheol cried unto God,” when “his soul fainted within him.” But what were those sufferings—deserved sufferings—compared to those on the tree of curse, when the most forsaken of all forsaken ones—forsaken on our behalf!—cried, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?” When He was not only forsaken of all His disciples, whom He had called “friends,” and at last forsaken by God, but at the same time surrounded by “the assembly of the wicked,” all the power, malice, and enmity of Satan and men being let loose against Him All the poisoned arrows in Satan's full quiver, all the weapons of his immense arsenal were spent upon the holy, gracious, kind, and patient God-Man, when the “Mediator between God and men,” as the “Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world” was made sin for all who believe in Him, bearing their sins, when the reproaches of them that reproached God fell upon Him.

A solitary death-bed, when the dying one is forsaken of all his friends, relatives, or his servants, is something very melancholy. No voice of comfort or prayer to be heard, no loving sympathizing eye near, no tender hand to minister the last beverage, and to wipe the cold sweat from the brow of the departing one, and to close his eyes! Who would wish so to die?

Such a loneliness in death has been the lot of some great men of this world. It was the case with the famous conqueror, Robert of Normandy. The same solitary gloom surrounded the death-bed of the great statesman, William Pitt. A neighbor of the celebrated minister sent a messenger to his house to inquire how he was. He found the gate wide open, and the house-door likewise. The house was deserted and the stillness of death reigned. The messenger proceeded from room to room, until at last he came to the death-chamber, where the lifeless body of the minister was lying on the bed—the sole inhabitant of the stately mansion, the doors of which but a few days since had been besieged by inopportuning flatterers, petitioners, and place-hunters.

But however sad such a desolate condition of loneliness when dying may appear in the case of the great of this world, how far more terrible would be the circumstances of the death of such an one if his bed, instead of being lonely and forsaken of all his friends, had been surrounded by his worst enemies—and the great ones of this world have no few of them each of them doing his best to embitter the last moments of the dying one by the most virulent reproaches, abuses, and insults, and thus increase his dying agony in the most cruel way! “For the credit of humanity” it is presumed that in civilized countries such a case never happens, even the greatest criminal before his execution being treated with every possible attention and regard to his wishes.

And has then such a case never happened, kind and philanthropic reader? The cross of the Son of God, the Lord of glory, is the reply to this question. Yonder cross, where the Officers and soldiers of the first nation of the then civilized world, together with the highest religious dignitaries of “that nation,” which called itself the “people of God,” in terrible unison of common hatred against God, and as instruments of the prince of this world, manifested all blackness and enmity of their hearts against God's dear Son, when God laid upon Him the iniquity of sinners and enemies, that they who believe in Him might be “healed by His stripes.” Yes, He was “forsaken” in the most terrible sense of the word, in order that you and I, believing reader, never might experience such a reality of abandonment. He was forsaken by all His own, and—terrible above all— “forsaken of God.” Yea, not only forsaken, but surrounded by His enemies, Satan's instruments; surrounded by the

“strong bulls of Bashan,” which “gaped upon Him with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.” The “dogs compassed Him; the assembly of the wicked enclosed” Him. All the cruel power, malice, and impurity of Satan was let loose against the spotless, meek, and patient Lamb of God.

Easy and comfortable was the prophet's position in the belly of the fish compared to that of his Lord and Master upon the cross, Who became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and for our disobedience went down into those “deep waters,” waters far deeper and far more terrible than those whither Jonah was transferred for his disobedience. But He Who, by His almighty word, released Jonah from the belly of the fish, when Jonah's prayer, his cry from the depths, “came in unto Him, into His holy temple,” was Himself delivered by His God, and “heard from the horns of the unicorns.” “In the days of His flesh” He “offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared.” He Who once was “crucified in weakness” lives now in the power of God, Who “inclined unto Him and heard His cry,” and “brought Him up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set His feet upon a rock, and established His goings.”

When on earth as “Son of Man,” He ever was “the faithful witness,” indefatigable in the service of His God; and even now, exalted to God's right hand, He continues to encourage and preserve the testimony of grace and truth divine on the earth so beautifully expressed at the close of the Gospel of Mark, which presents Jesus in His character of faithful and indefatigable servant.

“So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming, the word with signs following.”

May God in His rich grace grant us to become His obedient Son's obedient and willing followers and faithful witnesses, learning at the foot of the cross, what His prophet had to learn in the belly of the fish. For those truths, which Jonah had to learn there and then, are learned far more thoroughly, blessedly, and fruitfully in the former place than in the latter. We now return to our prophet.

God's Ways in Training His Own for His Service and Testimony .7

CHAP. 7—JONAH IN NINEVEH.

Jonah's own will now is broken, and he is thus a fit instrument for delivering Jehovah's message to the inhabitants of Nineveh “And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.” God, in His great patience and grace, now repeats the same words of commandment which He had spoken to Jonah the first time. But the prophet had now learned obedience, that chief requisite for every servant. What a difference between the third verse of the third chapter of Jonah and the same verse of the first! In the latter we read, “But Jonah rose up to flee onto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down unto Joppa.” How different in the third chapter! “So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.” It was the same Jehovah, Who nine centuries later laid prostrate in the dust the high spirited Saul of Tarsus (when he, like a furious lion, breathing out threatenings and slaughter, was on his way to Damascus), and made him say, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” and said to him, “Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things, which are appointed for thee to do.”

Whatever might have been the infirmities of the prophet Jonah, cowardice was none of them, as observed already. He possessed great courage of faith, which we saw him manifesting during that terrible storm. The same courage of faith which he had shown at sea he now shows on the land. “Nineveh,” we read, “was an exceeding great city of three days' journey,” i.e., of three days in diameter. And when reading at the close of the book, that it contained no less than one hundred and twenty thousand infants, “that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand,” it will not be difficult to arrive at an estimate of the whole of the population of that “exceeding great city,” immense for those days.

But it was not only the size but the “wickedness” of that proud and mighty city, referred to by Jehovah Himself in the first chapter, which the prophet naturally had to dread. If now-a-days, in a civilized world, which calls itself Christian, the gospel messengers of Christ and the witnesses of His truth, according to their faithfulness in their testimony and walk, have to expect opposition, scorn and persecution, what could Jehovah's prophet expect from a city, the wickedness of which had come up before God, ripe for judgment? It was not the message of peace and salvation through the rich grace of God, for the greatest sinner who repents and believes in Jesus, together with the warning to flee from the wrath to come, which Jonah had to announce to the inhabitants of that ungodly city. His message was, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” What kind of reception had the bearer and pro-claimer of such a message to expect from such a people? Nothing but affront, and mockery, prison and death.

But the same courage of faith, which had characterized the prophet during the storm and even in his terrible prison at the bottom of the sea, whilst in the path of disobedience (though confessing and repenting of it), distinguished him now, when in the narrow and dangerous yet safe path of obedience. “And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet

forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." From house to house, from street to street, Jehovah's fearless prophet proceeds with his solemn message. Before the door of the poorest hovel, and before the gate of the rich, and at the portals of the palaces of the king and his great men, his warning voice is heard, announcing the approaching judgment. For "there is no difference, all have sinned."

God's power and blessing accompanied the message of His obedient servant. The busy hum of the bazaars is interrupted by the warning call, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Buyers and sellers cease from their bargain. The workmen leave their workships to listen to those ever-repeated solemn notes of the prophet. The pleasure-seekers forsake their dances and games; the drunkards start up from their carousing, and the voluptuous from their conches; for like a trumpet of judgment the terrible words sound in their ears, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." And not in their ears only. They sank down into their hearts and consciences like barbed arrows, fixed there by the Spirit of God.

The thief, the robber and the murderer, leave the works of darkness, for judgment is at hand. The solemn voice of the prophet has reached even their hardened consciences. Even the idol-priests forsake the now empty temples and their false gods, which have ears and hear not, eyes and see not, feet and go not. The word sent by God enters as a two-edged sword into the consciences and hearts of the inhabitants of Nineveh. Before the prophet has reached the heart of the city, his solemn message has spread with the rapidity of lightning over the immense metropolis. "So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them."

Their repentance was genuine. They did not say, "Forty days yet?" delaying their repentance till the last, nor did they wait for the decree of the king and his nobles to put on sackcloth. Everything was done spontaneously, because it was the work of God. The royal decree was only the seal and the proof that the work was general, extending from the highest to the least.

The solemn message sent by God found its entrance even into the king's palace. That invisible power, which wrote upon the walls of Belshazzar's festive hall those solemn words, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," and made "his knees smite one against another," moved, by the words of the prophet, the heart of the king of Nineveh, and entered into his conscience. Like Belshazzar and his great men at Babylon, so trembled the king of Nineveh and his lords. But their fear, unlike that of Belshazzar and his great men, led to a repentance not to be repented of. It was the "fear of the Lord," which "is the beginning of wisdom," which makes wise unto salvation by taking heed to His word, and by which men "depart from evil."

"For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water: but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands." It might, perhaps, appear strange to some, that even the cattle, herd and flock, should have been constrained to take part in the fasting. What had the poor dumb animals done to be forced to such an involuntary abstinence?

The reason appears to be simply this. Where God begins his work of repentance in the soul of a sinner, sin becomes known and judged not merely as to its fruits—i.e. sins or evil works—but as to its root and inward character. An instance of this we find in Psa. 51. There the penitent king of Israel, who had been more faithful when a shepherd than when he was a king (after the God-sent word of the prophet Nathan, “Thou art the man!” had, like a sharp arrow, pierced his heart and conscience, and placed him in God's holy presence), not only confesses his great transgressions and sins, i.e., what he had done, but what he is. He not only judges the bad fruits of the bad tree, but the bad tree itself. Not by way of a light excuse, but in thorough self-judgment, he says, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” He lays the ax to the root of the tree, to judge not his parents and progenitors, but himself.

So it was at Nineveh, only that there it was the effect rather than the root of sin. “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” Where God works repentance in a soul, He first shows to the sinner what sin is in His sight, and then the effects of the evil and its terrible extent, and afterward the root of it. In the first chapters of the Epistle to the Romans up to the middle of the fifth chapter, the bad fruits of the bad tree, sins, are dealt with. Thence, until chapter 8., the root of the tree, sin. In the eighth chapter, besides, the effect of sin (not merely of sins as to the sinner) upon a groaning creation, travailing in pain, and subject to vanity and to the bondage of corruption for man's sake, is re-called to our humbling notice.

And not only does creation groan ender the outward effects of sin, but the poisonous influence of it has affected its inmost parts. Sin has permeated the whole creation and corrupted everything. The passions of anger and strife, envy, greediness, vengeance and violence, we perceive throughout the whole animal world around us, from the ferocious lion down to the little angry bee, from the tame dog to the rapacious wolf. Through the microscope we perceive in a single drop of water thousands of tiny animalcule, invisible to the naked eye, pursuing and consuming each other. The “right of the stronger” exists not only amongst men, but amongst animals, from the eagle amid air and the mute tribes of the deep down to the animalcule in a drop of water. In the millennial kingdom, beneath the scepter of the “Prince of Peace” and “King of Righteousness,” at the time of the “liberty of the glory of the children of God,” the whole creation, now groaning and travailing together in pain, and “in earnest expectation waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God,” shall be “delivered from the bondage of corruption.” Then “the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play at the holes of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den,” whilst Satan himself, “that old serpent,” shall be “shut up in the bottomless pit.”

The fruits of sin, i.e., sins, are easily perceived by men, and judged and punished too, as far as they become injurious to human society. But it is astonishing to see, how little, even amongst Christians, sin in its real nature and its in every way pernicious effect is being recognized and judged and condemned. The edict of the king of Nineveh and his nobles might serve us for an example in this respect. For that decree, extending even to the cattle in the city, showed at all events how deep and real was the feeling of repentance, wrought in them by God through His prophet, and how true the sense and judgment of sin in its nature and extensive effect.

But this was not all. The royal edict concluded with these words, “Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?” The same Spirit of grace and truth, Who produces in the sinner the recognition and confession of his sins against God, and makes him in his conscience feel the burden of them in God's holy presence, at the same time inspires the penitent heart of the sinner with confidence in God's mercy and grace. Whilst his burdened conscience would keep him at a distance from God, his heart, moved by the gentle and tender Spirit of grace, draws him towards God. Both the Old and the New Testaments furnish us with many instances of this wondrous operation of the Spirit of truth and of love. (Psa. 25:11., 51:1; Dan. 9; 8 Luke 5:8; comp. John 6:68, Luke 18:13, and many other passages.)

The same effect of the Spirit of God we perceive in the remarkable edict of the king of Nineveh. But at the same time its closing words, “Who can tell, whether God will turn,” &c., remind us of the words of a greater king than he, I mean king David, whose genuine deep repentance, expressed in the fifty-first Psalm, has just been alluded to. David's child, the fruit of his terrible sin, was about to die. The king, prostrate in the dust before God with fasting and praying, tearfully besought God for the life of the child, for he said, “Who can tell, whether Jehovah may be gracious to me, that the child may live?” But his prayer could not be granted; the fruit of sin must die.

With the king of Nineveh it was otherwise. For however great his and his people's sins had been, David's sin was incomparably greater according to the measure of the truth revealed to him, and of the divine favor and privileges and blessings bestowed upon him. Nineveh's repentance was real. It was a general awakening to such an immense extent and reality, as is without parallel in the Old Testament, except, perhaps, on the occasion of Israel's return to Jehovah on the mount of Carmel (1 Kings 18), and, though in a smaller measure, in the days of the apostles at Saron and Lydda, and thirty years ago in Ireland.

What a sight! Thousands and thousands of penitent sinners, in sackcloth and ashes lying in the dust before God, deploring their sins, from the king and his great men down to the lowest criminal and to the poorest beggar. From that immense scene of general corruption and violence, vast and numberless sounds of mourning and weeping now ascend to heaven, mingled with the lowing, moaning, and groaning of the fasting and suffering beasts. And as to men, those sounds were not mere signs of an outward repentance. They were accompanied by “fruits meet for repentance.” God, who searcheth the hearts and reins, saw that Nineveh's repentance was genuine.

“And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not.” In cases of repentance, God deals with nations as He does with individuals. Where He sees real repentance in departing from evil, He also repents of the evil, that is, of His threatened judgment upon the evil, and punishment being no longer necessary, He does not carry it out.

At the time when cholera first appeared in England, spreading death and consternation, a great mortality took place in one of the emporiums of commerce. Thousands fell a prey to the plague. The magistrate of the city then appointed a certain day for general humiliation and prayer. The same day the last case of death by cholera took place, and soon the plague ceased. Not many years afterward England was visited with the murrain or cattle-plague. Whole districts were almost denuded of cattle. With every day the distress increased. The government then appointed a day for national humiliation and prayer before God. From that day the cattle-plague decreased and

soon disappeared.

As a sad counterpart of the facts referred to, but all the more solemn confirmation of the principle of truth just mentioned with regard to God's righteous government, we refer to the short, but terrible war between two great European powers not many years ago. The issue of that war, in its remarkable incidents without parallel in the annals of history, may be ascribed by the strategists and politicians of this world to the great strategic superiority of the leaders, or the greater physical strength of the soldiers and the national enthusiasm, or the superior commissariat, &c., of the victorious army. But the eye, enlightened by faith and the word of God, sees farther and deeper than natural ken, recognizing the true reason for the unexampled success of that war in two simple facts, which enabled one at the beginning of the war to foretell its expected result. Those two facts were, that at the very outset the ruler of the victorious nation, alike with the people, recognized God and their dependence upon Him as to every success, whilst on the part of their opponents scarcely any mention was made of Him; and secondly, because the cause, for which the victorious army fought, was a just one. God, the leader of battles, was with those who recognized Him and whose cause was a just one, and gave them victory upon victory, till at last the victorious army appeared before the gates of the capital of the conquered enemy—the “Nineveh” of this age. But unlike Nineveh of old, there was no repentance nor penitence, nor fruits meet for repentance, no sign of national humiliation before God. Prayers there were many, but they were offered up before idol-shrines. The heavier the blows of; divine judgment fell upon them, the more closely they clung to their idols. (Of course, this refers to the nation in general, for the prayers of real Christians in that country could not avert the judgment of the impenitent nation as such). It happened to them again, what the prophet Isaiah had prophesied of Egypt, “Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence, and the heart of the people shall melt in the. midst of it. And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor;.....and the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof, and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards” (Isa. 19:1-3).

At last a spectacle, unheard of in history, presented itself. The capital, having been surrendered and afterward vacated by the victorious army, was besieged by its own citizens and compatriots, entrenched within the camp of their common enemy. As in the camp of the Midianites of old they slew one another, the victorious people of God witnessing the unnatural spectacle from the heights of the surrounding forts occupied by him.

God's ways in His sovereignty and government are the same with nations as with individuals. He Who once spoke, “Hast thou seen how Ahab hath humbled himself?” dealt in mercy with penitent Nineveh as He did in judgment with the modern impenitent one. He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

And what of Jonah? Obedient to the will of God he had discharged his solemn duty. His conscience had been reached, and his will broken, but not his heart. Not a single tear, when he announced to young and old in that great city the terrible judgment of God; not a single trace of pity and sympathy with the imminent awful doom of those numberless fellow-creatures of his. But more of this in the next chapter when “Jesus, weeping over Jerusalem,” will be the subject of our

meditation.

God's Ways in Training His Own for His Service and Testimony .8

CHAP. 8.—JESUS WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM.

“And when He was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it, saying: If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things, which belong unto thy peace But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation” (Luke 19:41-44).

What a different scene from that spoken of in our preceding chapter! There we heard Jehovah's prophet announcing the impending divine judgment to the then world's capital, hardened in sin and wickedness. We saw the immediate and general effect of the God-sent warning upon its inhabitants, and God (Whose natural work is grace, and judgment His strange work) sparing the penitent city.

But here we behold, not Jehovah's prophet, obedient and courageous, yet without a sign of compassion with those whose doom he had announced. but Jehovah Himself, Zion's King, presenting Himself to the city of David, whose Son He was. And how did He appear at the gates of that city, so privileged with all kinds of temporal and religious blessings, where once the queen of Sheba had done homage to king Solomon and admired his wisdom? How did He, Who was greater than Solomon, appear before the gates of Jerusalem? Was it in His war like apparel, with His “vesture dipped in blood,” as “King of kings” and “Lord of lords,” with His “sharp sword” at the head of His “heavenly armies” on the “white horses” of victory, as He will appear at a not very distant time for the battle of Armageddon, when His enemies will be made His footstool? No, the “Prince of peace,” approached the “city of peace,” in the humble peaceful train foretold by the prophet Zechariah, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

But alas! the city of peace “knew not the things which belong to her peace.” She knew not “the time of her visitation.” That happy moment, when all Israel will burst into the glorious song of praise, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord,” had not yet come. Only the baby and the multitude of His disciples sung this song in happy anticipation of that moment: even “the stones would have cried out,” if they had been silent.

But the hearts of the builders at Jerusalem were harder than the stones of their streets. They rejected the Stone which God had laid in Zion, for He was to them a Stone of stumbling. Their hard unfeeling voices interrupted the sweet harmony of the song of praise from Christ's disciples with the shrill sound, “Master, rebuke thy disciples.” What blindness! What insolence against the “King of Zion,” Who by the few words, “I am He,” laid prostrate Judas and the whole band. But the perfect harmony of the meek and lowly heart of the King with the daughter of Zion could not be

disturbed even by such a rude interruption. His only reply to the blind leaders of the people was, “I tell you, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.”

And when Jesus then beheld the city, whose leaders had given Him such a reception, had their treatment chilled His affections for the “beloved city?” He wept over Jerusalem. He knew, that the same multitude now thronging around Him and chiming in with the “Hosanna” of His disciples, would, after a few days, clamor for His death, shouting, “Crucify Him! crucify Him!” Did this restrain His tears? No, it only called them forth, on account of the terrible judgment, which was impending over Jerusalem, after the last testimony of the wondrous grace and the longsuffering of God should have been rejected by their stoning His martyr Stephen. That judgment He was about to pronounce over the unhappy blinded city. It was a judgment still more terrible than that pronounced upon Nineveh by the prophet Jonah, just as Jerusalem's crowning sin was incomparably greater than all the sins of Nineveh had been. “And when He was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it.”

Oh, what tears were these, Christian reader! Precious as were those tears which the “Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief,” wept at the grave of His friend Lazarus, no less precious were these which Jehovah-Jesus wept over that city, whose sole response to all the blessings she had received of Him was the tree of curse and the cup of gall and vinegar. The land, which, after the rain which had “oft come upon it,” had brought forth no fruit but a crown of thorns for Him, Who sent down the rain, and had in His own person watered that land for more than three years with showers of blessings, was now “nigh unto cursing,” and its “end to be burned.” Nothing but judgment remained. But the tears of the Judge preceded the pronouncement of the judgment.

Some years ago a very affecting scene took place at some court of assizes in this country. The judge had to pronounce sentence of death upon a young person of respectable family, who had committed murder. But the circumstances connected with that Misdeed were of a nature so affecting and appealing to human sympathy, that all present in that densely crowded judgment hall were deeply moved. And when the fatal word, “guilty,” had been pronounced, and the judge put on the “black cap,” and proceeded to pronounce sentence of death upon the young culprit, he hid, overcome by his feelings, his face in the sleeves of his black gown, and then, with a voice hoarse with emotion, pronounced the fatal sentence. In that hall scarcely a tearless eye was to be seen on that occasion, from the judge and the jurymen down to the roughest in the crowd of spectators.

We honor such a judge whose stern office had not made him forget to feel humanely. But in that case there were “extenuating circumstances” of such weight, that they deeply moved the judge's heart, and produced, on the part of the jury, a strong commendation to royal mercy, which was granted.

But could any “extenuating circumstances” be found in the case of Jerusalem? The parable of the vineyard is the answer to that question. The servants, whom the Master of the vineyard had sent from time to time, to receive the fruits thereof, had been beaten, killed, and stoned by the husbandmen. At last the Master had sent His Son, saying, “they will reverence him.” But the husbandmen said, “This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.” “And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.” That terrible moment had arrived, and to the Son of the Master of the vineyard nothing was left but to pronounce upon the blinded and hardened city its imminent terrible judgment, but not before He had wept over her, to

whom already before (ch. 23.) He had addressed, in the wonderful and magnificent language of Jehovah, those solemn parting words: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. Verily I say unto you, ye shall not see Me, until the time come, when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

Those words of Jesus, “how often?” are the answer to the plaintive question, “how long?” pervading the whole of the prophetic part of the Old Testament, in the Psalms and the Prophets. When the wrath of God was “smoking over the sheep of His pasture,” and “the enemy had done wickedly in the sanctuary (roared in the midst of His congregations, and set up his ensigns for signs, and broke down the carved work at once with axes and hammers, and cast fire into the sanctuary,” leaving a scene of desolation), the most hopeless of all these circumstances after all was this, that “there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.” Even in the greatest calamity there remains some consolation so long as the end of it can be foreseen, and somebody is at hand who can tell how long it will last.

When the prophet Isaiah was charged by Jehovah with the solemn warning message of judgment concerning Judah and Jerusalem, which overwhelmed his heart as the glory and holiness of Jehovah just before had overwhelmed his conscience, he exclaimed sorrowfully, “How long, O Lord?” as much as to say, “How long is that terrible moral condition of heart of Thy and My own people to continue? O Lord, surely thou wilt not exterminate Thy people, till none remain?” The Lord's answer is, Till the result of their obstinacy has taken place, “Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.” Then the promise of a “remnant” is given to the prophet. “But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten; as a teil tree and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.”

That judgment, announced by Jehovah's prophet, was first accomplished by the carrying away of Judah into the Babylonian captivity. According to His promise, given to His prophet, God sent in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah a remnant from the captivity back to Canaan, to rebuild Jerusalem. But even this “tenth” was again to be “eaten,” i.e., despoiled through a judgment more terrible than those that preceded; for the descendants of those Jews who had returned from Babylon sinned still more than their fathers. They were the husbandmen to whom the Son was sent, and who cast Him out of the vineyard and killed Him. The same “King, Jehovah of hosts,” who had announced that judgment to His people by the mouth of His prophet Isaiah (John 12:41), now weeps over Jerusalem, but at the same time announces the impending judgment to the blinded city. His answer to the “How long?” of His prophets now is “How often.” “How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings; and ye would not.” Then He takes up the thread where he had left it, in Isa. 6. There He had replied to the prophet's question, “How long?” with, “Until the cities be desolate, and the houses without men,” &c. That “until” referred to judgment. But in His touching mourning over Jerusalem Jehovah-Jesus begins where He had ended in His answer to Isaiah. He says, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate;” and then concludes with a gracious “until,” at the final blessing at the glorious return of Him, the once rejected King Messiah, when His people, delivered from the terrible dominion of the

false Messiah, will burst forth into the jubilant exclamation of homage, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

Yes, we repeat, Blessed be He Whose coming again we may now expect daily, nay, hourly, to take us, together with all that are His, up into His Father's house. Thither He has gone before to prepare a place for us, and there we shall be forever with Him, in the full uninterrupted enjoyment of His love and grace, praising and appreciating it better than we have done here below, and whence we shall appear with Him and all His saints to reign with Him over this earth. Then the holy heavenly Jerusalem will, as a gloriously adorned bride, descend with Christ; and the earthly Jerusalem, then no longer to be wept over, but beloved and holy Jerusalem, will be an unenvious eye-witness of unheard-of earthly blessings, following upon unprecedented sufferings, “since there was a nation.” These blessings will be showered down by Jehovah upon her, then no longer a separate and desolate one, but restored to His full favor, when He who once wept over her, will say to her “Thou art fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.” And she will answer, “Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits.”

Beloved, may we, to whom it is given, then to appear with Christ, to reign with Him over the then blessed earth, as His bride, the “Lamb's wife,” and to be witnesses of the re-acceptance, on the part of Jehovah, of His earthly people, when Isaiah's vision will have become a blessed reality, and heaven and earth be united in blessed and undisturbed union—may we walk worthy of our high calling, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. It is not enough to announce, like Jonah, with the bold and courageous voice of faith, but with an indifferent and cool heart, to sinful “Nineveh” her approaching judgment; it is a very different thing to “weep over Jerusalem.” It is all right, like the apostle of grace and glory, “knowing the terror of the Lord, to persuade men,” but something more, like him, “constrained by the love of Christ, to beseech in Christ's stead, Be reconciled to God!”

The God of all grace give to His messengers of “peace by the blood” of His dear Son, not only the voice of Jonah, but also the heart of Paul, and the tears of his and our meek and lowly Master!

Chapter 70

God's Ways in Training His Own for His Service and Testimony .9

PART II.—WHAT JONAH Learned UNDER THE GOURD.

CHAPTER 9.—THE GOURD.—FOUR TREES.

We now come to the second and much harder lesson, which the prophet had to learn under that miraculous tree, commonly called the gourd. It was a wondrous tree indeed, not only on account of the suddenness of its origin and decay, but because of the wonderful scene which took place at its foot between Jehovah and His prophet. It was very different from that between Jehovah and His faithful and yet so tenderhearted servant Abraham (Gen. 18). In the latter we behold Abraham soliciting Jehovah's pardon for Sodom, that ungodly city, which showed no trace of repentance, but the very opposite. Here, on the contrary, we hear Jehovah's prophet murmuring at the grace and pardon granted to penitent Nineveh.

“But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. Then said the Lord, Doest thou well to be angry?” Here the real motive of Jonah's flight, recorded in the first chapter, comes out. The prophet makes no secret of it. In Ch. 1. I have commented already upon Jonah's terribly selfish motive, and therefore need not here enter again upon it.

What language on the part of a prophet towards God, and of a servant towards his supreme and sovereign Lord! Jonah's self-will, indeed, had been broken. But of what avail is a broken will, without a heart broken under the sense of pardoning divine grace and redeeming love? A broken will may fit us for serving the Lord, but only a broken heart fits us for suitable service, as has been truly observed. How soon Jonah had forgotten his distress and prayer in the fish's belly, and his deliverance from the terrible prison! Then he could not thank God enough for having saved him from the “belly of the grave.” And now, when the same saving or sparing divine grace is to be extended to a whole city with numberless penitent inhabitants, he murmurs against that grace. And why? Because he thought that, through the remittance of the judgment announced by him, his prophecy and consequently his character as prophet would be compromised. Rather let a whole city perish, and millions of souls be hurled into eternity, and hell, than a prophet be discredited!

Oh, what a terrible thing is the desperately wicked unbroken heart, even when self-will has been tamed and broken in! How often does it happen that in the fiery furnace of trial, under God's chastening hand, the will appears to be broken, without the sinful heart with its selfish and idolatrous inclinations having really been judged in God's presence. The consequence is, that when the trial is over, the evil root in the heart, having never been cut to the quick by the knife of self-judgment, produces fresh shoots, and soon bears its sad fruits. So it was with Jonah. Rather die, than live as a discredited prophet. How patient and longsuffering is God's answer, “Doest thou

well to be angry?" Jehovah deals graciously and tenderly with His downhearted and murmuring servant, intending to deal not only with his conscience, but with his heart. How calculated His whole way of procedure in this last chapter to accomplish that gracious purpose.

"So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city." Even after the forty days had elapsed, he evidently could not bring himself to believe that Jehovah would entirely disown his prophecy, and thus expose His prophet. He clearly still entertained some, lingering hope that God would at least in some, though less severe, way visit Nineveh with judgment.

So he builds a booth on the east side of Nineveh and settles down in expectation of some judgment to come. The "Lord of glory," Who so gently dealt here with His discontented and grumbling prophet, was Himself crucified nine hundred years later, on the west side of Jerusalem, to bear the judgment due to Jonah's people and to us. The sun of God's favor and mercy, which for more than a thousand years had shone upon that city, was then setting. And whilst those hands which had fed thousands of hungry ones and healed countless sufferers, and those blessed indefatigable feet which had served to carry the heavenly Messenger of peace from place to place, when He was "going about doing good," and delivering them that were oppressed by the devil, were about to be nailed by cruel hands to the cross, there went up to God from the heart and lips of the crucified Messiah and "King of the Jews" that marvelous intercession, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

What a prayer at such a moment, Christian reader!

It could only come from Him, Who had wept over Jerusalem. His martyr Stephen prayed afterward in the spirit of his Master, but he could only do so on account of the cross and victory of that blessed One. Reader! how much have we imbibed of the spirit of that same gracious Master, Who says, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you?"

Jonah knew very little of the spirit of his Master, when murmuring in the east of Nineveh against divine grace, whilst the sun of God's mercy had just risen shining upon the penitent city. But God, "Who is good and whose mercy endureth forever," gives to His poor servant a fresh proof of His kind provision and care, to soothe his grief. A new link in the chain of His wise providence now appears. "And the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd." The hasty and disappointed prophet soon subsides into the enjoyment of his boon, and whilst enjoying its cool shade he makes himself as comfortable as he can in his sad post of observation.

There are especially four trees in holy Writ which with regard to our subject are full of instruction. Two of them we find in the Old, and two in the New Testament. The two former are "trees of grumbling," for in the persons connected with the two we behold the fruit of "Meribah." The two latter we may call "trees of blessing," perceiving in the two persons associated with them the fruits of true and fervent prayer and looking for the Savior. The first of these four trees is the "juniper tree" with the grumbling prophet Elijah beneath its branches. The second is the miraculous tree or "gourd" in Jonah 4 with the murmuring prophet Jonah in its shadow. The third is the "fig tree" (John 1) with Nathanael praying at the foot of it; and fourthly the "sycamore tree" with the searching

Zacch■us in its top. Beneath which of these four trees is the Christian reader mostly to be found? Is it the two “grumbling trees” of the Old, or the two “trees of blessing” of the New Testament?

A few remarks on each of them may, under God's blessing, be profitable for some of us.

God's Ways in Training His Own for His Service and Testimony .10

CH. 9. (CONTINUED.)

THE JUNIPER TREE AND THE GOURD.

The first of these two trees we find in 1 Kings 19 Elijah, that faithful prophet and “man of God,” had just before (ch. 18.) glorified God by his courage of faith. In that unique scene of heroic faith and decision for God he had served as an instrument of His grace to restore apostate and idolatrous Israel and bring them back to Jehovah as the only true God. But Satan did not rest. He sought to occupy the prophet with self and with the act of unexampled heroism Elijah had performed on that grand occasion. In that attempt the tempter appears to have succeeded but too well, as Elijah's own words clearly prove (ver. 10). Peter's self-confidence was followed by Peter's cowardice. After the cutting off the ear comes the denial. Such has been the natural order before and since the days of Elijah and Peter until now. Peter dreaded the words of the high priest's maid, and Elijah became alarmed at the words of the wicked queen, Jezebel. We find him in the wilderness, under the “juniper tree,” praying God (almost in the same words as, forty years after, did the prophet Jonah) to “take away his life.”

But the same pitiful and merciful God, Who gave to Jonah the cooling shadow of that miraculous tree to soothe his disappointment, sent His angel with food and drink, to refresh His discouraged prophet under the juniper tree. But after arriving at the foot of Horeb, the “mount of God,” Elijah has to listen to the humbling question, “What doest thou here, Elijah?” Was this the place for a prophet of God? His post was at the gates of the city; in the market place; or at the entrance of the temple; or wherever the concourse of the people was most numerous, and consequently the testimony of divine truth most public, decided, and dangerous. What a difference in Elijah's position in ch. 18. from that in ch. 19.!

And what was the prophet's reply to the heart-searching question of his divine Master? Does he humble himself, confessing his want of faithfulness and of courage and of faith? No. His language is that of self-elevation and accusing others, as is always the case when a believer departs from the path of obedience and refuses to judge himself and to confess his sin. Elijah says, “I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” These words betrayed in a threefold way the prophet's unhappy state of soul, viz.,

(1.) Self-exaltation.

Unjust accusation against God's people, whom he charges with idolatry and persecution against God's prophets. Why, they had just turned away from their idols, and returned to the true and living God, and assisted the prophet in killing the priests of Baal.

Utter want of fellowship, in the sense of Mal. 3:16, with God's faithful remnant in Israel. There were seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed their knees to Baal, and Elijah did not know one of them.

How true it is that he who exalts himself only abases himself. Whilst accusing others, he accuses and condemns himself; his own lips betray and judge him. Far be it from me by these remarks to cast any disparaging reflection upon that faithful servant of God! Never since the days of Moses had God been so glorified by any of His servants, as in that wondrous scene of fearless faithfulness and victory over Satan, recorded in the eighteenth chapter of the First Book of Kings. But Elijah had failed to do what we also so frequently fail to do, in the combat of faith against the hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places, viz., to “stand, after having withstood in the evil day” (Eph. 6). Like Moses, he had also failed in not rendering the glory to God above all.

All this has been written “for our admonition.” God afterward honored His faithful prophet. Like Enoch, he did not see death, being caught up to heaven in the fiery chariot. But before that he had to learn a humbling yet blessed lesson on Horeb, the same “mount of God,” at whose foot the “God of glory and grace” had appeared to His servant Moses in the “burning,” yet not “burnt,” bush. God, Who on Sinai, the mount of the law, had caused “all His goodness” to pass before Moses, when Moses asked to see His glory, causes on Horeb, the “mount of God,” the heralds of His power—the “great and mighty wind,” the “earthquake,” and the “fire” —to pass before the terrified prophet, who was glad “in the crushing sense of his nothingness” to hide himself in the farthest corner of a cavern before the terrible effect of the power of these mere heralds of divine majesty. But God Himself was neither in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire. But after the fire there came a “still small voice,” the voice of God's grace. “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” No sooner does the terrified prophet hear that “still small voice,” than he wraps his face in his mantle, and comes to the entrance of the cave, to approach God.

Is it not the same tender voice that speaks to the sinner penitent and crushed, but believing, “Your sins will I remember no more,” after this world had rejected and crucified Him, Who in His own Person was that “still small voice” when “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing trespasses?” And does not the same “still small voice” bid the once rebellions sinner, but now worshipper and saint, who, through the blood of Jesus has liberty to enter the holiest, to “draw nigh with a true heart?” Blessed be His glorious and gracious name!

But the full grace of God in Christ was unknown to Elijah, though he felt the sweet attraction of that gracious voice, and, in an outward way, approached God, freed from fear. Again, that voice of longsuffering grace spoke, “What doest thou here, Elijah?” It was the same voice that said in Paradise, “Adam, where art thou?” Alas! Elijah's heart had been only delivered from fear, but not softened, by that “still small voice.” Again we hear the same lamentable reply, “I have been very zealous,” &c. The prophet had learned little or nothing. He could make the fire come down from heaven upon the enemies of God and of His truth, but had not yet understood that after the fire comes the “still small voice” of grace, and that judgment is God's “strange work,” but grace His “natural work.” Alas! how much does the religious natural heart in its graceless John—zeal resemble that of Elijah, even in the two brothers Boanerges, the “sons of thunder!” (Luke 9:54.) No

sooner has the same answer the second time escaped Elijah's lips, than Jehovah commands him to return on his way to the wilderness of Damascus, and anoint not only two kings for Syria and Israel, but also another prophet in his (Elijah's) stead. Like Moses, the founder of the law, so Elijah, the restorer of the law, had fallen short of the glory of God and of His grace. Like Moses, Elijah was no, longer to remain in his office, but had to transfer it to a successor, who better knew how to enter upon the grace of God and to act in the spirit of it.

Before resuming our meditations on Jonah under the gourd, a few remarks on the third and fourth of our four trees under consideration.

3. THE FIG TREE.

The small group of believing Israelites, whom we behold in the second part of the First Chapter of John, who were waiting for the Messiah announced by John the Baptist, His forerunner, possessed one blessed quality common to all of them. They were looking out for the promised Messiah. They sought and found. “We have found the Messiah,” says Andrew to his brother Simon. “We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph,” Philip exclaims to Nathanael. Nathanael like them had searched the Scriptures, for he answers Philip, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But he had done something else. Before Philip brought him to Jesus, he had been “under the fig-tree” alone with Jehovah-Jesus, in deep exercise of soul. His utterances might have borne the character of words like these, “Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence.....For since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness; those that remember Thee in Thy ways. Behold, Thou art wroth; for we have sinned; in those is continuance, and we shall be saved. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou art the Potter; and we are all the work of Thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Jehovah, neither remember iniquity forever; behold, see, we beseech Thee, we are all Thy people” (Isa. 64:1-9).

Certainly, on that tree there were not merely “green leaves.” The Lord found there at least one ripe, good fruit— “an Israelite without guile.” And what a reward did Nathanael receive from the Lord! Jesus reveals Himself to him not only as the Messiah as He did to the others. Nathanael exclaims, “Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.” He had sought, and he had found; he had asked, and it was given to him; he had knocked, and it was opened to him.

What a blessedly instructive tree is that fig-tree, Christian reader! Though it was but a Jewish “fig-tree,” one can but fervently desire that we might be more continually found under it engaged like Nathanael, before Philip called him to introduce him to the personal presence of Him with Whom Nathanael had been engaged in the Spirit under that tree. Thus from the fig-tree the faithful Israelite was brought to the “apple-tree” —Christ (Song. 2:3). He “sat down under His shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to his taste,” just as he himself to his Master had been a refreshing fruit of the fig-tree.

Would God, I repeat, we were like Nathanael, engaged in the prayerful shadow of that tree, instead of in the dry atmosphere of a prayerless study, or under the poisonous shadow of the upas tree of modern religion. What different manner of men should we then be in our houses, in our offices and shops, and in our assemblies! Like Philip and Nathanael, only in a far higher sense, should we then enjoy, in the cool shade of the “apple-tree,” His fragrance and His sweet fruits, and our communion one with another as well as our individual testimony would have more of the sweet fragrance of Christ.

4. THE SYCAMORE, OR MULBERRY-FIG TREE.

That tree, with the little man in its top, so eagerly looking out for the Savior, appears to be a beautiful figure of the gospel and of the blessing connected with it, and promised to every sinner looking for Salvation. At sunrise the birds flutter from the lower branches to the tops of the trees, to greet the glorious orb and offer their songs of praise to the Creator. So did Zacchaeus. He was but a small bird, an insignificant wren. His elevation indeed was no self-exaltation, but rather self-abasement, when he, unmindful of his official rank and dignity, like a schoolboy climbed the sycamore tree, intent upon catching a glimpse of the Savior, Who came to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. He was eager to catch sight of Him Who had said, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Zacchaeus also sought and found; nay, he found even more than he sought. For not only did his eyes see the salvation which God had prepared before the face of all people, but the Savior, Whose joy it is to honor those who abase themselves, invited Himself as guest with Zacchaeus, and he heard the Savior's own voice say to him, “This day is salvation come to this house, For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Blessed mulberry fig-tree, with the fruit of a sinner looking for a Savior! May our Lord and Savior, Whose eyes, so graciously quick, at once discovered that hidden fruit and made it drop into His lap as a fruit of His labor, grant unto us wise and gracious eyes for a timely discovery of such fruits half hidden, as it were, between the branches of His gospel tree, without attempting to shake them off before they are ripe. God, Who alone gives the increase, will at the time of harvest make the ripe fruits drop into the laps of His servants, to render all the praise to Him from Whom all blessings flow, and to Whom all power belongs, even to “God and the Lamb,” once for sinners slain. For He Who called Zacchaeus and us has sent us into the world, as the Father had sent Him into it, to be witnesses of divine grace and truth. May He grant us the joy of reaping more fruits of our feeble labor from that blessed gospel tree, and to pray under its shadow to God for His rich blessing on all His laborers in the gospel. We shall then be kept from two extremes—either of growing cold in our interest in the work of the gospel for the church's sake, as is the case, alas! with not a few; or, what is just as bad, if not worse still, of making everything of the gospel, and neglect the church and the “assembling of ourselves together,” the sad habit of so many now-a-days. The saints at Philippi were equally familiar with the “fig-tree” and with the “mulberry-fig tree” or “sycamore.” And why? Because they were seated under the shade of the “apple-tree,” preferring its fragrance and sweet fruits to all other trees, “always rejoicing in the Lord.” Let us follow their example.

We now return to our prophet under the gourd.

God's Ways in Training His Own for His Service and Testimony .11

CH. 10.—WHAT JONAH Learned UNDER THE GOURD.

CONCLUSION.

Jonah now had to learn by the withering of his own heart in its disappointment what the tender pity and mercy of God's heart is. Be had not known how to enter upon that tender divine mercy, and therefore had to learn his own need of it through personal suffering. This he learned under the miraculous tree.

“But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. And it came to pass when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement [or, silent] east wind, and the Fan burnt upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.” His heart withered within, like the tree before him, and rose in bitterness against God, Who again said to Jonah, “Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?” The prophet's language now assumes the character of defiance: he replies, “I do well to be angry, even unto death.”

What a contrast to this was his language when at the bottom of the sea in the fish's belly! There his conscience had to say to him, and he cried to God in his distress. But at the withering of the gourd it was different. His conscience was silent in that case, but not his natural heart, which rose in rebellion against God. Had not the gourd been a gift of God, unasked for by Jonah? And no sooner did he begin to enjoy its shade, cooling the prophet's heated face, then God took it away; for Jonah no doubt perceived that the withering away of the miraculous tree as well as its sudden growth was the work of God. Did it not seem cruel? Did it not appear like mockery at the prophet's disappointment? Was this the reward for his fearless and faithful testimony in that great and wicked city? So the tempter would whisper to Jonah, and the natural and rebellious heart was but too inclined to listen to the evil suggestions of the old serpent.

But ought not the very rustling of the leaves of that tree, which had covered and cooled the prophet's head and body with their beneficial shadow, have spoken as God's “still small voice” to the irate prophet, “Jonah, what doest thou here on this sad place of observation? Art thou waiting for God's judgment, Who is ‘waiting to be gracious?’ Art thou angry, because He is good?” But the prophet did not understand as yet that voice of grace. He persevered in his graceless attitude. The tree had therefore to be stripped of its soothing ornament, so that none but the bare branches and stem might remain, and the prophet, deprived of its beneficial shadow, might learn by his own suffering his need of that sympathy which he lacked so much and had little known how to appreciate.

Even to the most excellent of God's saints this exercise of conscience and heart cannot be spared. Abraham's heart, as another has observed, certainly was grieved at the loss of Ishmael, but his conscience in that case had to say to him. It was very different when Isaac had to be sacrificed. There Abraham's conscience did not speak, but his heart all the more. God was trying his heart,

whether it rested more in the gift than in the Giver. Abraham stood the test. Jacob had to endure years of trials during his service with Laban; but his conscience could but remind him that his sufferings were deserved, and that he was only reaping what he had sown. His grief at the loss of Joseph was quite another thing, for in that case his heart had far more to say than his conscience.

The same difference we find in David, when amidst the ruins of Ziklag, and when leaving Jerusalem in his flight before Absalom. Never had David sunk so low as at that moment, when be offered his and his men's co-operation to the king of the Philistines, the inveterate enemies of God and His people, to fight against the people of God, David's own people. Terrible as was his sin against Uriah at a later period (for which God visited him through the rebellion of his son Absalom), yet David's moral degradation, even in that terrible case, was not so deep as it was at Aphek before the battle of Gilboa. What a difference between the shepherd boy David in his single-handed combat of faith with the mighty giant Goliath, and the chieftain David, offering his assistance to the same enemy against the people of God! It was the moment of his deepest moral degradation during his whole life. God in mercy frustrated David's wicked offer, urgently repeated notwithstanding the refusal on the part of the lords of the Philistines. But it was followed immediately by the just punishment of God. On their return David and his men found their homesteads burnt down and their wives and children had been carried away by the Amalekites. The smoking ruins of that city, which David had suffered himself to be presented with for a residence among the enemies of God and His people, in his unbelief and unfaithfulness, which is the child of unbelief, spoke loudly to David's conscience in his desperate position, when his own companions were ready to stone him. “But David encouraged himself in Jehovah his God.” Doubtless he must have been on his face in the dust before the Lord previously, or he could not have “encouraged himself in the Lord.” God gave back to him and to his companions all they had lost. David had encouraged and strengthened himself in the Lord his God. His deep exercise of heart and conscience was in that case but the forerunner of a bolder, more thorough, and devoted service than before.

Very different to his distress at Ziklag were the exercises of David's soul when fleeing from Jerusalem, his royal residence, and home of all that was dear to David's heart. Then, when fleeing from his rebellious son, he had to leave behind everything that was dear and precious to him. Jerusalem was a place very different to Ziklag. It was God's greatest gift to him; Jehovah's reward for all the persecutions, hardships, and contests which he had had to encounter. Jerusalem had been the goal of David's desires—godly desires. And now he had to give up all this on account of the deadly hostility and rebellion of his son Absalom. The tenderest and closest ties having been rent, there remained to the deeply abased king nothing but the favor and mercy of his God, whilst David's conscience even then did not fail to assert itself. Nathan the prophet had indeed announced the divine pardon to the king after his penitent confession, but he had added that the sword should not depart from his house, “for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” The grace of God, pardoning the penitent sinner, that he die not (Jam. v. 19, 20; 1 John 5:16, 17), and which restores him to communion with God, must not be confounded with the righteous government of God, which often makes a fallen but restored child of God during the whole of his after life feel and realize the solemn consequences of sin, not merely in the sense of God's justice, but of His wisdom and grace, in order thus to keep present to the memory of our hearts and consciences the solemn character of sin, often so pregnant with continuous sorrow in its

consequences—not in our communion with Himself, but for our practical humiliation and as a constant warning. For He knows how apt we are practically to forget the seriousness of sin, when its serious consequences have passed away.

Thus we recognize again God's hand in David's flight from Jerusalem, and in the events afterward. All these spoke, of course, with a loud voice to David's conscience. But, as has been observed already, David's heart was even more than his conscience moved and exercised by these events, from the reasons mentioned above. And when the king passed over the brook Kidron, and “all the country wept with a loud voice,” and “the king went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and went barefoot, and all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went;” and Jerusalem, the beloved city, with everything dear to the heart of the fleeing king, disappeared behind the temporary cloud, his spiritual horizon was thronging with thoughts of God and His mercy, which endureth forever.

But let us return to our prophet under the miraculous tree. It was God's intention that the heart as well as the conscience of His prophet (as of all His servants) should be exercised. There are believers whose consciences have been truly exercised, but from want of exercise of heart, they know but little of the sympathy of Christ. Jonah understood as yet very little of God's tender mercy. He had therefore through suffering to learn his own need of it.

“Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons which cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?” In other words, You, Jonah, pity this gourd, which came up in one night and perished in one night, and which then hast neither planted nor hast made it grow. You mourn over its shortened existence, because it gave you shade and coolness. You regret its sudden decay, because it deprived you of the relief and refreshment which that tree had provided for you. And should not God have pity on a city like Nineveh, where there are one hundred and twenty thousand babes [God knew their number] that cannot discern their left hand from their right, besides those millions of penitent inhabitants, creatures of Mine, and your fellow-sinners, Jonah, and so much cattle? “God, Who hears the voice of the raven, and without Whom not a sparrow falls from the roof, had heard even the moaning and lowing of the cattle—His creatures—ascending to heaven together with the cries of lamentation of numberless penitent sinners. The prophet had witnessed that grand deeply-affecting scene of general penitence, which had not failed to reach the ear and heart of the gracious God and Creator, Who with His numberless hosts of mighty angels rejoices “over one sinner that repenteth.” But those sounds of mourning had only fallen on Jonah's ears. They had not reached his heart. He was only thinking of the divine pardon which would be called forth by their penitence, and impair his reputation and character as a prophet.

But now God had reached Jonah's heart. Once He had spoken to His servant Job in a whirlwind, when Job's self-righteousness was to receive the final blow, after God had spoken by a mediator's voice and silenced him, who had silenced his friends. God had spoken to His servant Elijah first by the mighty “wind” and the “earthquake” and the “fire,” and then with the “still small voice.” And now He has reached also the heart of His servant Jonah. In the storm He had spoken to his

conscience; but now the “still small voice” of His grace has appealed to the heart of His prophet, and not in vain.

I do not remember any passage in the whole range of the Old Testament, where the perfect patience and goodness of God, and His marvelous longsuffering and grace appear so prominent and express themselves in such a touching way, as in our chapter, recording Jehovah's way of proceeding with His grumbling and discontented prophet! What language the servant had dared to employ against his Master, the poor worm against his Maker? And what is Jehovah's answer? The Master condescends to give account, so to speak, to His servant about His gracious dealing with penitent Nineveh, in words which man's pride would have deemed unbecoming for a great and mighty Lord and Master. But you and I, Christian reader, know that nothing could possibly be worthier of such a God than the way and manner in which He dealt with His feeble servant and the words He spoke to him. The Lord had made him feel His mighty hand. In the storm and in the belly of the fish He had spoken to His conscience and broken his will. But now Jonah's heart was to be broken and to be melted under the sense of God's grace, love, goodness, mercy and longsuffering. And what words could be more adapted for that purpose than those addressed by Jehovah to His prophet? On the dark Sinaitic background of the Old Testament they stand out all the more distinctly and wonderfully in shining letters. The voice which once amidst the thunder and lightening of Sinai, from the dark cloud and with the voice of the trumpet, had forbidden the trembling people under pain of death even to touch the mountain, at the summit of which the majesty of God appeared, speaks here to the servant, murmuring at God's grace, “And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city?” The same, Who from the mount of terror, where even Moses, His faithful servant, stood trembling and shaking, had spoken, “And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart,” we hear saying here to the grumbling prophet, “And so much cattle?” Well might Jonah have exclaimed,

“What patience, O my God, is thine,

With all the grievous sins of mine!

It is beyond expression.

Where is there a God, so ready to spare,

And where a Master, so kind to forbear,

In spite of such transgression!”

But God's gracious intention with Jonah had now produced its desired effect. The book closes with. God's question to His prophet left unanswered. Jonah's heart has been reached and melted under the overwhelming sense of divine mercy and grace. Like Job, he lays his hand upon his mouth, and his silent confession seems to say with Job, “Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.”

The simple fact, that the prophet himself wrote this book, thus recording his own sin and shame, proves how thoroughly not only his will but also, his heart had been broken, softened and humbled under the sense of the grace of such a God. For true as it is, that the account written by him was indited by the Holy Ghost, this in no way impairs the beautiful significance of that fact; for we may

rest assured that the Spirit of God, Who might have chosen any other servant of God for penning that account, would not have employed the prophet. Jonah for writing this portion of Holy Writ, so full of instruction within so small a compass, had not the prophet been in that condition of soul, which God in His own school had intended to produce in His servant.

May we too receive the instruction which God intends for as also, for the things that happened to Jonah, the prophet, “are written for our admonition.”

J. A. v. P.

(From the German of “Worte der Wahrheit in Liebe.")

Chapter 73

The Golden Calf: Part 1

However much controversy may be needed for the preservation of the faith once delivered to the saints, it is at best a sorrowful necessity; it not only endangers the spirit of those engaged in it, often clothing self-glorying under the garb of zeal for the Lord, but it extends its influence beyond the immediate actors. The age itself may assume a controversial character, so that everything is viewed through controversial medium. At the era of our Lord's ministry, the age was characteristically religious; but at the same time so controversial, that one so ignorant as the woman of Samaria had caught the spirit; and the effect on her was to hinder any exercise of conscience before God. The present age presents too just a parallel to the one mentioned. It is also characteristically a religious age, and at the same time so systematically sectarian, that the truth of God is only viewed through controversy; and it thus fails of reaching the conscience, and hinders very effectually the ascertainment of the state of souls, individually, before God. There is a remarkable impatience of resolving things into their principles, so that some of the most important truths fail to affect the conscience, because that which embodies them is supposed to be attacked; and in this manner a deal of the most searching truth is deprived of its point. It is even difficult to apply principles to the consciences of Christians so as to avoid the appearance of controversy; for time has sanctioned so much evil which is not suspected to be evil, that principles have never been tested. Now if, as individual Christians, we know that the principle of every manifested evil is to be found in our own hearts, so as to induce the need of self-judgment and constant watchfulness (for grace alone maketh us to differ), so is it equally true that all the corporately manifested evil in Christendom has arisen from acme wrong desire working unsuspectedly in the hearts of real Christians; so that there is quite as great need to watch against the working of those principles among Christians corporately, which eventually lead to the worst form of evil, as for an individual Christian to watch against the principle of hatred, which, if cherished, might lead to actual murder.

The principle embodied in the golden calf is one which most readily insinuates itself among real Christians. It may indeed be recognized when it has received a gross and tangible form; but spiritual wisdom is able to detect the working of the principle before it becomes embodied in form. The golden calf is one of “our figures” (1 Cor. 10:6, margin). Its history has been recorded for “our admonition.” Israel, outwardly and typically redeemed, serve to show, in a great variety of ways, those who are eternally redeemed to God through the blood of the Lamb, their peculiar dangers. That which “happened” to Israel is “written for our admonition.” And thus their failures become beacons to us, and at the same time “figures” of those forms of error to which, as redeemed, we are liable. It is important, therefore, to seek to ascertain the germinant principle of evil which led to the setting, up of the golden calf.

The people had sung the song of redemption on the banks of the Red Sea. They had murmured; but their murmurings had only been answered by the grace of God in supplying their need. They had fought with Amalek, and prevailed through the uplifted hands of Moses. After all this they receive the law by the “disposition of angels,” and by the hand of the mediator. The covenant

between Jehovah and Israel is solemnly entered on and ratified by blood—the people on their part with one voice, saying, “All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.” Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, go up to the mount with seventy of the elders of Israel, and were permitted to see the God of Israel on the mount, and to eat and drink; but Moses is called up into the mount of God, with this express injunction to the elders, “Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you; and behold Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them.” The people had seen the glory of the Lord at a distance; “'and the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.” Here we have brought before us the position of the several parties (see Ex. 24).

Moses, hidden from the sight of the people, was still occupied with God for the people. He was at that very time receiving instructions from Jehovah for the construction of the beautiful tabernacle, and the ordering of their needed priesthood. He was still blessedly serving them, although they did not see him.

The evil commences with the people, but is consummated by means of the very leader, in whose charge they are left, during the absence of Moses. The people do not mean to disown Moses; they fully recognize him as the man who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt; but he was not then present to their sight. This was their need—some present visible prop on which they might cast themselves so as to be relieved from dependence on that which was invisible. They said to Aaron, “Up, make us gods which shall go before us.” Their desire was urgent, and to be gratified at any cost. Without a murmur they bring their golden ornaments to Aaron. How deeply rooted is this principle in the human heart! That which men pay for, they also have title to to use for their own ends; and if it promises relief from dependence on God, they will purchase it at any cost. That which the people demanded received its shape and form from Aaron. He received the gold “at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf.” It is remarkable, how little definiteness there was in the mind, either of the people or of Aaron, as to what would be the result of their gratified desire. The people said, “These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” How soon is Moses forgotten in this new and present object! At first they only desired gods to go before them, to carry on that which Moses had begun to do, even to complete their deliverance out of Egypt, by leading them into Canaan. But now they regard these gods, and not Moses, as having brought them out of Egypt. How deeply, how solemnly instructive is this! One departure from the fear of God may lead to incalculable mischief.

The feelings of Aaron are different from those of the people. “When he saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to Jehovah.” How subtle is sin! Aaron, on being remonstrated with by Moses, excuses himself on the plea of simply humoring the people in what he did. “Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it to me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.” Alas! what amount of evil may not a good man occasion by acting unfaithfully in a case of emergency. Aaron was left in charge of the people, to meet any difficulty which might arise; but the leader falls in with the desire of the people, and unintentionally leads them into idolatry. He himself had no idolatrous object in that which he did, neither was idolatry the intention of the

people. In vain was Aaron's proclamation, “To-morrow is a feast to Jehovah.” The calf, and not Jehovah, had the homage of their hearts (see Acts 7:41). “And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” On this is grounded the solemn warning to us, “Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them” (1 Cor. 10:7).

We must now turn to the thoughts and judgment of God Himself on this scene. And at the very outset we are instructed in a solemn and searching truth—that God does not measure things by the intention of human agents, but by His own glory. The thoughts of God are not as “our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways.” Our simple and plain duty is to acknowledge Him in all our ways. There is no such thing before God as innocence of intention, when any man presumes to prescribe for himself the mode in which he thinks God can be honored, or the work of God can be furthered. In such instances the means employed are quite as important as the end intended. God is to be honored in the means we use, “for to obey is better than sacrifice.” And it is in the acknowledgment of God, by waiting upon Him in His own appointed way, that we shall find the most searching test of our obedience to Him, and the uprightness of our heart before Him. And may it not with truth be asserted, that the deepest corruption, both in Israel and the church, can alike be traced to some individual or corporate act, the only fault of which was, that it was unauthorized by God? But this is a fatal fault. It is the introduction of the will and wisdom of man into the very sphere where the will and wisdom of God are pre-eminently displayed in carrying out His own work.

We must now transfer our thoughts from Aaron and the people, and their feast below, to Moses standing in the presence of Jehovah Himself within the cloud of glory on the top of the mount. And well would it be for us frequently to do this practically, so that we might form a godly judgment of our own ways. We should then be enabled, when inclined to rejoice in the work of our own hands, to detect the danger of secretly departing in our heart from God.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”

The desire of the people, the surrender of their gold, the act of Aaron had together ended in corruption. How fearfully instructive! The people of God cannot interfere with the things of God, but they corrupt them and themselves by them. They cast aside their proper glory, and become occupied with that which debases them. That Jehovah was their God was their glory; but they would make to themselves gods.

In their after-history they desired to be as the nations, and to have a king over them, when Jehovah was their King. They corrupted themselves, and lost their distinguishing glory. And when do we find corruption stealthily creeping into the early church? Is it not in “philosophical wisdom and admiration of teachers?” The glory of the church is the presence of the Holy Ghost in the midst of her. The gospel needed not the extraneous support of wisdom or the schools—it came “in demonstration of the spirit and of power.” The introduction of human wisdom, admiration of teachers, and all that was most esteemed among men, would virtually displace the Holy Ghost, so

that His power, His teaching, His guidance would practically be superseded. “If any man defile [corrupt] the temple of God, him will God destroy [corrupt].” How rapidly it spread! Evil communications corrupted the manners of the church. And surely it does not require depth of learning, but subjection of mind to the scriptures and the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, to trace back to this germinant corruption in the church, suppressed at the time by apostolic power, the full-blown corruption yet to be manifested, when that day of the Lord God Almighty comes, “that He should destroy those who destroy the earth” (Rev. 11:18). Viewed in the light of heaven, and as from heaven, this introduction of human wisdom into the church was by the apostle seen to be corruption. Those who would have introduced it, thought it a help and an ornament.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 74

The Golden Calf: Part 2

“They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them.” The rapid inroad of corruption into that which God has set up in purity is remarkable. The people of Israel, awe-struck by the majesty of God, had heard the solemn words, “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” To this they had responded, “All the words which the Lord hath said, will we do.” And yet after the lapse of a few short days, they turn aside out of the way, and make to themselves gods. Does this surprise us? Is it not rather too faithful a history of the ostensible people of God in all ages and in every dispensation? God has not been pleased to record how long man stood in innocency; but the sacred narrative proceeds, from his exercise of dominion over every living creature, and his reception of the blessed gift of a help-meet from God, to state his grievous fall. When Noah, who had in the ark passed safe through the judgment, is set up as head of a new world, how quickly there is his fall into drunkenness recorded.

And has the latest intervention of God in the revelation of the gospel of His grace proved an exception to the general rule of immediate failure on the part of man? If we proceed to the period after the Holy Ghost had come down from heaven, what says the apostle of that which would be after him? “I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.” The mystery of iniquity had begun to work in the apostles' time, when there was spiritual discernment to detect its beginnings, and infallible authority to meet the evil. But how quickly had the disciples turned out of the way! And this is solemnly important to mark—the worst evils which so secretly worked in their days would only become more formed, when their discernment and authority was no longer present to detect and to resist it. It is indeed a curious feature of the mind of man, that in the things of God he prefers stopping at secondary authority when access is open to its primary source. Both Jews and Christians have alike resorted to antiquity for their pattern, when the thing needed was to judge antiquity by the light of the scripture. Jewish antiquity was the tradition of the elders “vain conversation received by tradition” from their fathers; for which they vehemently contended, even at the expense of nullifying the scriptures. And so, among Christians, the most bitter contention has been for traditionary religion, whilst “the faith once delivered to the saints” has been little regarded. Christians forget how early was the departure from the faith once delivered to the saints, and propose to themselves as a pattern of excellence some age of the church in which there must have been deterioration. Thus they virtually set aside scripture and neglect the guidance of the Holy Ghost, to unravel the intricacies of time-honored tradition and enable them to find that path which is pleasing to God. When tested by scripture, it surprises us to find how much of that to which we have clung will not bear its uncompromising light.

But how solemn is the judgment of God on the people! “I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now, therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them.” But if Moses was in the place of righteous judgment, he was also in the very atmosphere of grace, and there he could take the place of intercession, and prevail because his plea was the honor of the

Lord Himself. This must ever be a prevailing plea, because it acknowledges the righteousness of the judgment of God. “For Thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.” Moses can neither excuse nor extenuate the sin of the people. It is not the place of intercession to do this, because everything before God must be truthful. What comfort for us to know of Christ that “He is at the right hand of God, and that He also maketh intercession for us!” He knows the righteous judgment of God; He knows, too, the evil of our sin; but His intercession is grounded on the way in which He Himself has vindicated the righteousness of God in putting away our sin. The intercession of Moses brings out a new feature; viz. the long-suffering of God with His redeemed people—with that (i.e., Israel as now the professing church) which has the responsibility as well as the privilege of bearing His name. This was shown in the mount, and afterward proclaimed by Jehovah Himself to Moses. God had previously shown His long-suffering in bearing with the world for a hundred and twenty years, while the ark was preparing. He had borne with the abominations of the Canaanites four hundred years, “because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.” And now, when He has redeemed to Himself a chosen people out of Egypt, this very people corrupt themselves and become the objects of His long-suffering. And is it not the same in the present time? Is not God now showing forth “the riches of His goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering” towards man as man? and this only to be scorned and despised? while those who are outwardly by profession His people, and bearing His name, are quite as much the object of His long-suffering as the world? The outward professing body has not continued “in the goodness of God"; and all which awaits it is to be “cut off” —to be spued out of His mouth (Rom. 11, Rev. 3).

But we must follow Moses down from the mount to the scene of Israel's sin. The eye of Jehovah had seen it from heaven, His dwelling place; there also Moses had heard the report of it, and interceded for the people, and not in vain. But when Moses leaves the immediate sphere of the grace of God, and becomes himself a spectator of Israel's condition, his feeling is that of indignation and not of intercession. His “anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.” How had Moses interceded when the Lord had said, “Let Me alone that My wrath may wax hot against them!” There are deep lessons to be learned here. “God, the judge of all,” who must ever judge according to His own holiness, can at the same time act according to His own grace. He cannot extenuate sin; and “indignation, and wrath, tribulation and anguish,” are revealed by Him as “against every soul of man which doeth evil.” God has revealed to us how He is both faithful and just in forgiving us our sin. But how different is man from God!

The sin, which God had seen and pardoned at the intercession of Moses, when Moses himself sees, he cannot bear with. Here we may learn the infirmity of the creature, and something beside this—that the saint cannot bear in himself the very sin which God had pardoned; nor will the servant of God tolerate in the people of God the sin of that people. What indignation had the godly part of the Corinthian church evinced against themselves for tolerating sin among them, even after the sin itself had been punished! Indignation is dangerous, because it is so allied to human infirmity, and “the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God;” but indignation is godly when arising from the sense of an insult cast upon God, or the shamelessness of saints as to their condition before God. We dare not think of man, however highly honored of God, above what is written; and we gain deep instruction from Moses in this instance, it may be, showing human infirmity, or from Moses acting as “the servant of the Lord.” How constantly do we find the practical truth of that word— “when I would do good, evil is present with me.” Honest zeal will often find,

close by its side, self-satisfaction or self-exaltation. Real kindliness of feeling may readily associate with itself disregard for the honor of Christ. What need for walking in the fear of the Lord, and of habitual exercise of soul before Him, in order that we may “judge righteous judgment!”

In that which follows there is a typical action, embodying deep practical truths. Moses “took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.” Their “sin” (“and I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire,” Deut. 9:21) thus became inherent in them. It was the “original sin” of the dispensation, and hung over them all the time of their prophets and their kings, and during the whole period they were in the land. They never recovered from its effects. At length, after the lapse of centuries, this original sin was met by due punishment in the Babylonish captivity (Amos 5:25-27, Acts 7:41, 42).

It has not pleased God ever to reverse an original sin. He allows it to take its course, and during the progress of the development of its effects, He takes occasion to unfold more and more of His purpose in Christ. This is true of the first great original sin, as we are so wonderfully taught in Rom. 5, where we find the important statement that there is no such thing as the reversal of one sin without the reversal of all—no reversal of original sin without the reversal of actual transgressions as well. “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment, was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification.” It is one of the many ways which human wisdom has devised to nullify redemption, to assign to the work of Christ the reversal of original sin. Thus it is said, that man is placed in a salvable state, so that as to actual salvation it must be uncertain; because salvation is again contingent on conditions to be performed by man. Men use such knowledge as they “naturally” have of Christ, not to see their increased responsibility, but to elevate their own state before God, so that when redemption is preached as a divine certainty to faith, such a testimony invades their self-complacency, and upsets all their theory. Blessed indeed to know that “by Christ all that believe are justified from all things.”

The position which the church of God occupies is very remarkable. “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” The ages had all run their course. Under whatever favor of God man had been placed, he had never answered to his responsibility. Some fatal sin had invariably occurred at the commencement of the age, and continued throughout its downward course; and the special failures of the typically redeemed people of God, which marked their downward course, are “written especially for our admonition.” But has the church been admonished? Or, rather, neglecting admonition, has not the church followed in a course answerable to those very sins by which we are admonished in Israel's history? The apostolic testimony too plainly and painfully proves, that in their days the church had already taken the downward course. Early in the days of the apostles there was manifested what may be regarded as the original sin, or original sins, of the church, even when there was power to detect and expose evil, and to obviate also its baneful effects, by the only way opened under such circumstances—the confession of the sin, and faith in the ability of God to bless by His grace for His own name's sake.

We find this instruction blessedly set forth in Israel's history. “And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not; for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not. Ye have done all this

wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart, and turn ye not aside; for then should ye go after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain. For the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you His people." The original sins of the church have held on their course for eighteen hundred years; and have produced as a result the present actual state of the professing Christian world, in the midst of which the church of the living God is nevertheless to be found. The full results of these sins seem to be on the eve of manifestation; and when fully manifested will be met by direct judgment from God, analogously to the judgment of God on Israel's sin in the wilderness, viz. subsequent Gentile domination—a judgment still in actual force against Israel, since their sin also has been fearfully aggravated in again rejecting Jehovah, even Jehovah Jesus, that they might maintain their own traditions.

(To be continued.) (Continued from page 115.)

Chapter 75

The Golden Calf: Part 3

But to return to the scene into which Moses had come from the presence of Jehovah. After making the children of Israel to drink down their own sin, Moses turns to Aaron and asks him— “What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?” In Aaron we find a representation of the fatal principle of expediency, or of man's attempt to manage the things of God. His excuse is, that he thought it best to humor the petulance of the people. He had no intention to make them gods. “Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me; then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.”

And have not the greatest corruptions in the church originated from the effort of good men to try to consecrate a popular feeling, little thinking what they were really sanctioning? For image-worship itself was just “the calf which came out” of the homage which was rendered to the memory of saints, and which good men tried to turn to good account—but which is idolatry in the sight of God. Human expediency in the things of God speedily turns to discomfort and weakness. Aaron had listened to the people's cry instead of resenting it, and by listening he had made them “naked to their shame among their enemies.” And is it not always so? In every case where the will of man has worked, and worked successfully, it has produced weakness; the desire may be gratified but leanness enters into the soul.

But here it is not the discomfiture of enemies; the Lord uses another rod, the most painful and humbling for those who are disciplined by it. The watchword is, “Who is on the Lord's side?” and brother is armed against brother. The commission is, “Slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.” He whose name is “Jealous” is a jealous God; and well indeed is it for us to have a godly jealousy, especially in a day when lukewarmness as to the honor of Christ so generally prevails.

Moses has now but little heart for intercession; when on the mount he breathed the very atmosphere of grace; but now he is in the actual scene of sin, and sees it as the Lord had seen it on the mount, when Moses had interceded with Him for the people. But now nothing but the sin of the people is before Moses. “Ye have sinned a great sin:” he must needs get out of the scene of sin, in order to get into the place of intercession. Blessed instruction for us: such a High-priest became us, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens”! Ever able to estimate sin as it must be in the sight of Him Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and at the same time to throw the glory of His own person, and the value of His own work, into His own prevailing intercession. “And now I will go up unto the Lord: peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.” Surely Moses the servant of the Lord goes up to the mount dispirited and dismayed. He had not personally sinned the sin; but for that very reason he felt it the deeper. “And Moses returned unto the Lord and said, Oh this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.”

There was the truthful consciousness in Moses that he could find no plea in himself or in the people to present before the Lord; his only alternative was either to find forgiveness in the Lord's own grace, or that he himself might be blotted out, so as not to witness the shame of His people. How strongly does this consciousness of worthlessness in Moses bring into relief the dignified consciousness of worth in Jesus— “I have prayed for thee!” But the Lord has His own ways: when corporate failure has come in, He can deal with individuals in the midst of it according to His own righteous judgment. “Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.” At the same time it is clearly announced, that the corporate sin would in due time be punished corporately; “nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.” These are principles of God of deep and solemn importance.

God is pleased to commit to man's responsibility certain corporate blessings. Such blessings become speedily forfeited through the failure of man. God still hears on in protracted long-suffering, dealing with individuals according to His own grace, but at length the time comes for corporately visiting the failing body. “And the Lord plagued the people because they made the calf which Aaron made.” Aaron laid the blame on the people; but it is regarded by God “as with the priest, so with the people.” God knows the amount of guilt attached to the several parties, and where they may lay it the one on the other, God charges both alike.

(Continued from page 131.)

Chapter 76

The Golden Calf: Part 4

The principle embodied in the golden calf was early manifested in the church; and is in fact the principle of idolatry. “Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play.” This admonition was given to those who were “called saints.” Is it unneeded now? Are we in no danger of idolatry? We are aware of the fine-drawn distinctions of the Romanist to justify picture and image worship; and we know also that it is not the meaning which they attach to such homage, but the light in which it is regarded by God, which is the truth? Many also most confidently believe, on the authority of the word of God, that the corruption of Christendom will end in open, gross, and palpable idolatry. Neither the progress of civilization nor the emancipation of the mind of man is any safeguard against gross and palpable idolatry. It was the wisdom of man making the Godhead the subject of speculation instead of the object of faith, which originally introduced idolatry. “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations [reasonings] and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” Surely man will never find his way back to God, but by the very road of his departure from God; and the veneration of ordinances and intellectual rationalism in the end may meet in palpable idolatry. The word of admonition still applies to saints, “Neither be ye idolaters;” for the principle of idolatry is some present palpable object between the soul and God, which effectually hinders dependence on God; and this is the principle embodied in the golden calf.

We find in the days of the apostles, as may be remarked, the original elements of this principle of idolatry under several modifications; and in the progress of declension these elements have received more or less tangible shape. The grossest form of the original sin of the church is found in the Galatian error—an error held up to us as a beacon, but which really has been followed as a pattern, so as to have been in great measure the formative power of the great professing body. It is assuredly a form of the principle of the golden calf, being the natural expression of the feeling of the human heart, as though God was served with man's hands as needing something. It is said of the people when they made the golden calf, “they rejoiced in the work of their own hands,” the same in principle as the Galatian error. But how strongly does the apostle rebuke it! He knew of no middle way between the grace of God in Christ and idolatry. The Galatians had been turned from idolatry to the true God by faith in Christ Jesus. They were now in danger of relapsing in principle into their old idolatry by adding the law to Christ. “Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods; but now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again [back, marg.] to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?”

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we have the same principle in another form; the virtual setting aside of the perfectness of the work of Christ on the cross, and His present perfect priestly ministry, by recurrence to Jewish ordinances of worship. It is but the golden calf in another form. “As for this

Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." Even so now: Christ, received into the heavens, is forgotten in His ministry there; and early indeed did the church desire to have some visible and tangible helps to worship, when they took their pattern from the sin of Israel. Stern and solemn is the warning rebuke of the apostle (Heb. 6 and x.), so that scarcely a saint has been unexercised by it; and yet how little has it been aptly applied. These warnings are manifestly against the tendency to relapse into the old form of worship, to go back to the shadow and lose the reality. "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? "

Judaism, Christianized, is a large and extensive characteristic of the great professing body. Men have assimilated the very things which God has contrasted, and by putting together such heterogeneous materials Christ has been dishonored; even as the true Jehovah was dishonored by Israel setting up visible gods, which really rivaled Jehovah Himself.

The principle of the golden calf was detected by the watchful eye of the apostle, working among the Colossians in a more subtle form. Such foreign helps as philosophy and asceticism were there intruded; but in reality they hindered the simplicity of the gospel, instead of helping the soul to realized union with Christ. Such helps took it away from dependence on Christ, so that those who esteemed them did not "hold the head." This form of the original sin of the church has worked its way in the downward course of the church. The fleshly mind has intruded its own conceits into the revelation of God. Under the garb of affected humility, or it may be even under the semblance of spiritual aspirations, we find the glory of Christ in His own person, as well as the glory of His work, virtually superseded. It is the exercise of the human mind on the great facts of revelation, instead of staying the soul by faith on these great facts, which especially marks this principle and it is one which readily insinuates itself. Direct "holding the head" is the only safeguard against it.

But by far the most subtle form of the idolatry of the golden calf is that which we find in the Corinthian church. It is "glorying in men" or idolatry of man; not of man as man, but of man as the minister of Christ. How nice the line between esteeming such very highly in love for their works' sake, and putting them between the soul and Christ, according to the desire of Israel to have gods to go before them, when Moses who brought them out of Egypt was lost to their sight! It is very possible to find this principle lurking where priestcraft is loudly abjured. The desire is deeply rooted in the human heart to have some tangible medium between itself and God; which, while it may be the medium of communicating the truth of God to the soul, is nevertheless used by the soul to hinder its coming into immediate contact with Christ Himself, and to keep it in measured distance from God. Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, the gracious gifts of Christ Himself to the church, the moment each severally became regarded as the minister of so many persons, were by this very means put between the soul and Christ. They were gloried in as men. This was to their own dishonor, and at the same time to the deep damage of the souls of those who thus set them up over themselves. For by thus misplacing the channel of His grace, Christ Himself as the fountain of all grace is lost

sight of. “All are yours.” The infinite fullness of Him in Whom dwelleth all fullness is little known; because men only regard one, instead of the many channels; by which that fullness is communicated. “All are yours” (1 Cor. 3). And thus, virtually, it is not the truth itself which is so much regarded, as the person who testifies to it. The truth is accredited by the person, and not the person by the truth. “And,” said “the Truth” Himself, “because I tell you the truth, ye believe Me not.” Any dogma of an accredited teacher would have been received; but the truth was unpalatable in itself and not received because of Him Who spoke it. In what little power is the truth which we do know held, because doctrines are received on the credit of man rather than of God!

The revealed order of God's dealings with His accredited people shows that, notwithstanding Hits long-suffering, He allows things to take their course and to work out their legitimate end; and not only is it positively stated in scripture, but it is confirmed by analogy, that the end will be idolatry. The long-suffering of God affords indeed the occasion for separating that which is essential, and cannot fail from that which, by being entrusted to man's responsibility, has failed; but it does not hinder evil principles introduced at the outset of the church working out to their necessary result.

The perversion of the gospel, as among the Galatians, is the almost accredited order. Rituals, forms of Judaism, prove that the church has fallen into the very form of error against which the apostle so solemnly warns in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Religious sentimentalism, mysticism (and asceticism in measure), the Colossian danger, have well nigh supplanted “the head;” and the glorying in men, ministers of Christ though they be, tends to eclipse the glory of Christ Himself, and to nullify the great doctrine of the present Comforter, “the Spirit of truth to guide into all truth.”

“Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them.” It is a standing and not a temporary warning. Let us give it a due place in our souls. There is but one safeguard—the occupation of the soul immediately with Him “Who is the image of the invisible God.” Has the person of Christ its due place in our hearts? Has He no rival there? Is there a holy craving to know Him? Is the thought of everlasting blessedness associated in our souls with being “ever with the Lord?” What is there lacking which we do not find in Him? Are we lost in the immensity of contemplating the Godhead? “In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Do we find the need of a medium of communication between our souls and God? “There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.” Only let us be alive to our danger—our own hearts—our own reasonings—the reasonings of others who combine with Satan himself to intercept the immediate intercourse of our souls with Christ. Even service, apparently done to Him, may distract our souls from Him. We need the exhortation “to continue in the grace of God,” and “with purpose of heart to cleave onto the Lord.” We need awakened jealousy for His honor. The duty of upholding the dignity of His person and the perfectness of His work is as incumbent on us as on the apostles. May the unction from the Holy One deeply teach us the words of the beloved disciple— “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. LITTLE CHILDREN, KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS. Amen.” J. L. H.

(Concluded from page 146.)

Chapter 77

The Good Confession Before Pilate: Part 1

The life of righteousness on earth, the life that is pleasing to God, must needs be a life of faith; because the great transgression has estranged God from the world that was made by Him (John 1:10), and so polluted it that it cannot be the rest and portion of the righteous. Wherefore it is written, “He that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6).

Faith is therefore the principle of all righteousness, practical as well as personal: personal righteousness or justification is of faith, that it may be of grace (Rom. 4:16); and practical righteousness or godliness must, as we thus see, be of faith also. Faith was thus the secret power that was working in all those who have ever obtained a good report (Heb. 11:2). Excellent things are indeed spoken of them; but these were all wrought through faith, which is of the operation of God. Faith in Noah floated the ark, while as yet, for 120 years, nothing but the dry land appeared. Faith in Abraham inherited the place and the everlasting city, while as yet those things rested only in vision and in promise. Faith in Moses saw Him that was invisible; and in multitudes (whom time would fail to tell of) faith would have nothing but the “better resurrection.” In all these there was found the simple vigorous exercise of the soul, believing the word and promise of God. No religion of their own wrought this in them; no effort at raising affections towards God and unseen things could have done it, but the blessed power (which is faith) of taking God's own word from His own mouth as true, of counting Him faithful Who had promised. Ltd so too, above all, in Jesus, the first and chiefest in the noble army of martyrs— “the author and finisher of faith,” faith rejoiced in what “was set before Him,” and reached after it, though it lay on the other side of the terrors and shame of the cross; such terrors (Thy “face was so marred more than any man,” Thou bruised Lamb of God!) as the heart of man had not conceived.

Paul exhorts his son Timothy, “to fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life,” in remembrance of this faith that was in the blessed Savior Himself. “Fight,” says he, “the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, Who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. 6:12-14). Eternal life was to be laid hold on by Timothy, and nothing was to be allowed, as it were, to shake off his prey. As the brightness of “the joy set before Him” was never dimmed in the perfect faith of Jesus, though the cross tried His tenure of it to the uttermost; so was Timothy to keep his grasp of eternal life, let him forego what else he might. God in promise had set that before him; and that He would bring out in all its promised blessing and glory at the appearing of Jesus; and to that Timothy was to cling in spite of all the world. The world around him were contentedly getting their portion in this life; and many through the love of it had erred from the faith (ver. 10); but Timothy was to flee this in his pursuit of eternal life. Faith knew its object from the word of promise; and Timothy was to embrace it at every cost.

But there is ever to be confession as well as faith. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made onto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). For God is to be confessed in a world that has disowned Him, as well as believed on in a heart that has departed from Him. This is His present glory in His saints, and this their service unto Him—service, which (it is true) may try them here. Their faith, like gold, may be cast into the furnace now, but it shall come forth hereafter stamped with the King's own image; for it shall “be found unto praise and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7).

When Jesus was a child, in subjection to His parents at Nazareth, He grew in favor with man as well as with God; for He was then serving as under the law, infinitely attractive in all that was blameless and good. “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). But when called from under that subjection, to witness for God in a God-denying world, then the world began to hate Him; as He says to His brethren, “The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil” (John 7:7). Then did His sorrows at the hand of the world (because of this His testimony) begin and take their course; every man's hand was against Him, while He sat alone. All His life then became confession, and innumerable evils at once and continually encompassed Him His supports were the supports of faith, and the light of God's countenance, and the hope of “the joy set before Him.” Thus was He throughout His ministry: but in an eminent sense was He the Confessor, when He fully entered into the character of “the Lamb of God.” Previously to this, He had been either in controversy with the unbelief of the Jews, or manifesting the name of the Father to those who had been given Him out of the world; but His character as “the Lamb of God” was formally taken up at the supper, when, like the worshipper under the law, He presented Himself as the victim or offering, saying, “This is My body;” and in that character He stood and suffered, from the time of His entrance into the garden, down to His giving up the ghost on the accursed tree.

In the progress of His deep and mysterious journey, after He had thus entered upon this character, He was successively called before both the Jewish and the Roman powers: and before both He stands the Confessor, ready (as He afterward accomplished) to seal His testimony with His blood.

And here I would turn aside for a while to inspect this blood, the blood of the precious chosen Lamb of God; for surely there is much in it of which we do not properly make our account. That blood was shed for the remission of sins, and it makes clean the conscience of the believing person. But what is found in that blood, that it should bear with it such a savor of rest and refreshing with God, and be of such virtue with Him for tainted sinners who plead it? It was, it is true, blood of God's own; as Paul says to the Ephesian elders, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood.” It was the blood of Him Who was, Jehovah's fellow, without which indeed it had been nothing save that of a mere man. But this was not all that it was; it was the blood of the righteous One also—of Him Who had magnified the law and made it honorable, presenting Himself to God without spot—of One who willingly poured it out rather than fail in one jot of service and obedience to God. It was the blood of Him Who had finished the work that was given Him to do; Who had stood for God against the whole world, at the expense and loss of everything; Who had before emptied Himself of glory, that God in the Son of Man might be glorified, as in man He had been dishonored; and after He had thus emptied Himself, He still went down even to the death of the cross. There was all this in the blood; it was

poured out bearing all this in it, and the savor of it with God was refreshing, “a sacrifice and an offering to God for a sweet smelling savor.” Of old the joy in it entered so deeply, that “God said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake” (Gen. 8:21). It was the blood of the righteous obedient Servant, it was the blood of Jesus the Confessor.

Confession is that which stands by the truth of God against the lie of man, and stands by it at the hazard of everything; and this confession was witnessed by our Jesus. Throughout His life and ministry, it is true, it had been the way of the Son of God to hide Himself: for having emptied Himself of glory when He took the ministry of our peace upon Him, His manner was, to refuse to know Himself save as the Servant of God. For He had come in His Father's name and not in His own, to seek not His own glory, but the glory of Him that sent Him. But the time was to be, when He must openly stand confessed. Therefore, when adjured by the high priest to answer whether He were the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, He stood to the confession of the truth and His glory, saying, “Thou hast said” (Matt. 26:64). But this was at the cost of everything; for then they at once began to spit on Him, to buffet Him, to cover His face with shameless effrontery, and to lead Him off as their prey, saying, “What need we further witness? for we ourselves have heard of His own mouth” (Luke 22:71, Matt. 26:65).

And He was to make confession still more public than this—more as in the presence of the world's collected powers and enmity—and more immediately too in the very face and shame of the cross. And therefore is it that this last testimony of the great Confessor is so singularly marked out by the Spirit of God as His “good confession” (1 Tim. 6:13). But I desire here to be somewhat particular, and listen very attentively to the character and bearing of this good confession, recorded as it is in John 18:33-37.

“Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews?”

Pilate throughout this solemn scene was clearly desirous to quiet the people, and deliver Jesus from the malice of the Jews. It appears from the very first, that he was sensible of something peculiar in this prisoner of theirs. His silence had such a character in it, that, as we read, “the governor marveled greatly.” And what divine attractions (we may here observe) must every little passage of His life, every path that He took among men, have had about it? and what must the condition of the eye and the ear, and the heart of man have been, that they did not discern and allow all this? But it is ourselves, dear brethren; we have looked in the face of the Son of God and have seen no comeliness there!

The governor's impression was strengthened by everything that happened as the scene proceeded: his wife's dream and her message to him, the evident malice of the Jews, and above all, the righteous guiltless Prisoner (though thus in shame and suffering) still persisting that He was the Son of God, all assailed his conscience. But the world in Pilate's heart was too strong for these convictions. They made a noise, it is true, in his heart; but the voice of the world there prevailed, and he went the way of it, though thus convicted. Could he, however, have preserved the world for himself, he would willingly have preserved Jesus. He let the Jews fully understand that he was in no fear of this Pretender, as he might judge Him to be; that Jesus was not such an One as could create with him any alarm about the interests of his master the emperor. But they still insisted that Jesus had been making Himself a King, and that if he let this Man go, he could not be Caesar's

friend.

And here we are led to see that there is no security for the soul but in the possession of the faith that overcomes the world. Pilate had no desire after the blood of Jesus as the Jews had; but the friendship of Caesar was not to be hazarded. The rulers of Israel had once feared that, if they let this Man alone, the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation (John 11:48); and Pilate now fears to lose the friendship of the same world in the Roman emperor. And thus did the world bind him and the Jews together in the act of crucifying the Lord of glory: as it is written, “For of a truth, against Thy holy servant Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done” (Acts 4:27, 28).

(To be continued.)

Chapter 78

The Good Confession Before Pilate: Part 2

But still, as we have observed, Pilate would have saved Jesus, could he at the same time have saved his own reputation as Caesar's friend; and therefore it was, that he now entered the judgment-hall, and put this inquiry to Jesus, “Art thou the King of the Jews?” For as the Jews had committed the Lord to him upon a charge of having made Himself a King (Luke 23:2), if he could but lead the Lord to retract these his kingly pretensions, he might then both save Him, and keep himself unharmed. With the design of doing so, he seems thus at this time to bare entered the judgment-hall. But the world in Pilate's heart knew not Jesus; as it is written, “the world knew Him not” (John 1:10 John 3:1). Pilate was now to find that the god of this world had nothing in Jesus. “Jesus answered, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?” Our Lord by this would learn from Pilate himself where the source of the accusation against Him lay: whether His claim to be King of the Jews was thus challenged by Pilate as protector of the emperor's rights in Judea; or merely upon a charge of the Jews.

Upon this hang, I may say, everything in the present juncture, and the wisdom and purpose of the Lord in giving the inquiry this direction is most manifest. Should Pilate say that he had now become apprehensive of the Roman interests, the Lord could have at once referred him to the whole course of His life and ministry, to prove that, touching the king, innocency had been found in Him. He had withdrawn Himself, departing into a mountain alone, when He perceived that the multitude would have come and taken Him by force to make Him a king. His controversy was not with Rome. When He came, He found Caesar in Judea, and He never questioned his title to be there; He rather at all times allowed his title, and took the place of the nation, which, because of disobedience, had the image and superscription of Caesar engraven, as it were, on their very land. It is true, that it was despite of the Majesty of Jehovah that had made way for the Gentiles into Jerusalem; but Jerusalem was for the present the Gentiles' place, and therefore the Son of David had no controversy with them because of this. Nothing but the restored faith and allegiance of the nation to God could rightfully cancel this title of the Gentiles. The Lord's controversy was therefore not with Rome, but with the rebellion and unbelief of Israel, with the “sinful nation.” And therefore Pilate would have had his answer according to all this, had the charge proceeded from himself as representative of the Roman power. But it was not so. Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew?” Thine own nation, and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me; what hast Thou done?”

Now this answer of Pilate conveyed the full proof of the guilt of Israel. In the mouth of him who represented the power of the world at that time, the thing was established that Israel had disclaimed their King and sold themselves into the hands of a stranger. This for the present was everything with Jesus. This at once carried Him beyond the earth and out of the world. For Israel had rejected Him, and His kingdom was therefore not now from hence. Neither indeed could it be; for it is written, “In Judah is God known, His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling-place in Zion. There brake He the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword and the battle” (Psa. 76:1-3). Zion is the appointed place for the King of the whole earth to sit and rule; and the unbelief of the daughter of Zion must keep the King of the earth away.

The Lord then, as this rejected King, listening to this testimony from the lips of the Roman, could only recognize His present loss of throne. “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence.” He had no weapons for war if Israel refused Him There was no threshing for His floor now, for Israel is His instrument to thresh the mountains (Isa. 41:15; Mic. 4:13; Jer. 51:20), and Israel was now refusing Him. Out of Judah is to come forth the corner, the nail, and the battle bow, and the house of Judah, and that only is Messiah to make His goodly horse in the battle (Zech. 10:4). Therefore in this unbelief of Judah He had nothing wherewith to spoil the stout-hearted, and to be terrible to the kings of the earth, nothing wherewith to break the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle (Psa. 76). His kingdom therefore could not be of this world, it could not be from hence; He had no servants who could fight that He should not be delivered to His enemies.

But this loss of a kingdom, which is “of this world,” is but for a while. For Israel who once said, “Crucify Him, crucify Him,” shall be brought to say, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” And then shall the goodly horse be prepared for the battle, Judah shall be bent for Messiah, the bow shall be filled with Ephraim, and the daughter of Zion shall arise and thresh His floor.

And the answer of the Lord to Pilate intimated this final recovery of His Kingdom. For while from the thus witnessed unbelief of His nation, Jesus perceived and allowed His present loss of it, yet He allows this in such terms as fully expresses His title to a kingdom, leading Pilate at once to say, “Art Thou a King then?” And to this His “good confession” is witnessed. For Pilate would have had no cause to dread either the displeasure of his master, or the tumult of the people; he might have fearlessly followed his will and delivered his prisoner, if the blessed Confessor would now alter the word that had gone out of His lips, and withdraw His claim to be a King. But Jesus answered, “Thou sayest that I am a King” From this His claim there could be no retiring. Here was His “good confession before Pontius Pilate.” Though His own received Him not, yet He was theirs; though the world knew Him not, yet was it made by Him. Though the husbandmen were casting Him out, yet was He the Heir of the vineyard. He was anointed to the throne in Zion, though His citizens were saying, that they would not have Him to reign over them; and He must by His “good confession” fully verify His claim to it, and stand by that claim before Pontius Pilate, and in him before all the power of the world. It might arm all that power against Him, but it must be made. Herod and all Jerusalem had once been moved at hearing that He was born Who was King of the Jews, and sought to slay the child; but let the whole world be now moved and arm its power against Him, yet He must declare God's decree, “I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” His right must be witnessed, though in the presence of the usurper, and in the very hour of his power.

But now we are led into other and further revelations.

This “good confession” being thus witnessed, the Lord was prepared to unfold other parts of the divine counsels. When He had distinctly verified His title thus in the very presence of Cesar-i.e., of the world which as yet fills the gap, the way was opened for Him to testify His present character and service. “To this end was I born,” says the Lord, “and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth; every one that is of the truth heareth My voice.” His possession of the kingdom was now for a time hindered by the unbelief of His nation; but He here shows that there had been no failure of the purpose of God by this. For meanwhile He had come

into the world for other present work than to take His throne in Zion. He had come to bear “witness onto the truth.”

The Lord by this “good confession” was “witness to the truth,” for His testimony of course was true. But this character extends far beyond this “good confession,” and the Gospel of John is used by the Holy Ghost as the especial instrument of unfolding it. For in John we see that the Lord had been conducting His ministry as “witness unto the truth” from the very beginning; as is said in chapter i. “the only begotten Son Which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” He had been manifesting the name of the Father to those who had been given to Him out of the world (John 17:6), and this is the same as bearing witness to the truth (see John 8:26, 27). He had come to give His elect an understanding that they might know Him that is true (1 John 5:20). Every one that was “of the truth,” as He here speaks to Pilate, had been hearing Him His sheep had heard and known His voice, while others believed not, because they were not His sheep (John 10:3, 4, 26). He that was of God had heard God's word at His mouth, while others had not heard His words because they were not of God (John 8:47). And hereby had been made manifest the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error (1 John 4:6). He had come into the world that He might say, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me” (John 14:6). He was the Good Shepherd come to search out His flock—to gather to Himself and to the Father all who were His—to bring into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God all the chosen children, and thus to fill up their full prepared measure; to bring forth sons unto God by the word of truth, to seal them with the Spirit of adoption, and to prepare for them mansions in the Father's house. The heavens were now to be opened; and the fullness of Him that filleth all in all, by the truth and through the Spirit, was to be prepared and brought into them.

Such was the Lord's present ministry; for such was He born, and had come into the world, and had He been throughout opening to His disciples. As He says, “I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world” (John 17:6). Though a King, and King too of the Jews, and to take yet the kingdom of the world, He was not now to exercise that power, for His title had been denied by His own nation. Israel's rejection of their King had now been sealed by that testimony of Pilate: “Thine own nation hath delivered Thee unto me.” The trial had now therefore fully proved them to be “reprobate silver.” The Lord's tarrying among them, if haply they would repent, was therefore now to be over. He could no longer go through their cities and villages healing and preaching the kingdom, but must take on Him other ministry; and that ministry He now fully and formally reveals saying, “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth; every one that is of the truth heareth Me.”

(To be continued.)

Chapter 79

The Good Confession Before Pilate: Part 3

But by this we at once discern the different purposes of God in His dispensations by Israel and by the church; for the further development of which I have judged this passage of scripture to be thus worthy of more careful notice than is perhaps commonly given to it. It is not as a King holding His citizens in rule, but as the manifester of the Father, making us sons, as we have seen, that the Lord is now fulfilling His pleasure. Through the word and by the Spirit He is gathering all that are “of the truth” (as He speaks to Pilate), filling up the measure of His body the church, which is His fullness.

We thus from this scripture get further evidence of the distinct purpose of God in His dispensation by Israel and the church; a subject that we have often considered. But while we trace these things, may we know the power of them in our own souls more and more! Knowledge without communion with God would only expose our souls to Satan; may the Lord preserve us in so tempting a day as this!

And from all this we learn that the present absence of the Lord is to be interpreted differently as respects Israel and the church. As respects the church, it is gracious; because for them it was expedient that He went away, as by that they have received the Holy Ghost to be in them, to teach them, as the Spirit of truth, the testimony of Jesus Who was the witness to the truth, the revealer of the Father. But as respects Israel, it is judicial; and righteously so—because it was Israel's unbelief and sin that occasioned it. It was by the wickedness of the husbandmen that the Heir of the vineyard was cast out. According to all this, when the Lord left Israel He turned His back on their city, leaving it for desolation, and saying, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23:38). He hid His face from them. But when He left His church, He left them in the act of lifting up His hands and blessing them (Luke 24:51). His face was towards them. The one action was judicial, the other gracious. When He left the Jews, He said, “Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me and shall not find Me, and where I am, thither ye cannot come.” But when He left His disciples, He said, “A little while and ye shall not see Me; and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father.” When of old the glory departed from Israel, every ray of it, as it were, was gathered up and not a trace left behind, no present mercy remained (Ezek. 11:23). But when Jesus ascended from the midst of His saints, it was but to give gifts to them (Eph. 4:12, 13); and as He said, “I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you” (John 14:18). As to Israel, the Lord is now asleep (Psa. 44:23); but as to the church, He is ever wakeful and active, the Advocate and Priest on high (Heb. 9:24, 1 John 2:1).

All this shows the different purpose which the Lord has as respects the church and Israel. The church during His absence is preparing through the Holy Ghost to stand in the glory of the Son; but it is the time of Israel's judgment.

And here I cannot refuse to notice the same distinct and decided teaching as to this, which we get in the parable of the talents (Luke 19).

The Lord is there presented to us as a nobleman who went into a far country, to get for himself a kingdom, and to return; who, previous to his departure, committed his goods to his servants to be occupied for him during his absence; and then on his return took account of them severally, but executed righteous judgment on his citizens, who had plainly told him before he went away that they would not have him to reign over them.

Now in this exhibition of the ways of God we shall find very clearly that the purpose (among others) of the present dispensation is to provide companions for the King in His glory, to give to Him those who shall share the throne of the kingdom with Him. The servants are distinguished from the citizens in this parable. The servants have their occupation during the nobleman's absence; but during that time the citizens are not within view at all. So is it with the church and with Israel. During this dispensation, which is the time of the Lord's absence, the church occupies the scene, and Israel as a nation are forgotten: there is neither Jew nor Greek; whereas after the return the distinction between the servants and the citizens is still as clear. The servants (found faithful) are called into the fellowship of the kingdom, and the citizens are punished for their rebellion. So again with the church and with Israel. The saints of the Most High are to take the kingdom with the Son of Man. They who have continued with Jesus in His temptations are to have a kingdom appointed them by Him, as He receives a kingdom from the Father. They who overcome are to sit with Him on His throne. The saints are to judge the world.

The servants of this parable are not the subjects, but the co-heirs with the returned nobleman; and such are the saints, “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;” they share the dominion with Him. They are not after the nobleman's return to bring forth their fruit, but they will then rather reap the glory of dominion with Him, as the reward of their having brought forth their fruit to Him now in this time of His absence. “Because thou hast been faithful in a very little,” it will be said to the servants by the returned nobleman, “have thou authority over ten cities.” But Israel, in the day of the return of their once rejected but then glorified King, are to meet the vengeance. Israel are the citizens, for Zion is the city of the Great King, and Jesus is the King of the Jews. It is as a King with His subjects or citizens that the Lord is to be associated with the people of Israel, and not as Heir with His co-heirs. And their cry, their rebellious cry, “We have no king but Caesar,” in the day of the returned nobleman, the day of the revelation of Messiah the King, is to be answered thus— “Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before Me” (Luke 19:27). The present absence of the Lord is not working their repentance; but rather the old rebellious spirit is judicially working in them till His return finds them ripe for the judgment. And thus will that return bring the “day of vengeance” (Isa. 61:1, 2; Luke 4:18-21), “the time of Jacob's trouble” (Jer. 30:7); of trouble such as never was since there was a nation (Dan. 12:1). In that day an alarm will be sounded, for it will be “a day of clouds and thick darkness” (Joel 2:12). “In all the land two parts shall be cut off and die” (Zech. 13:8). It will be a day that “shall burn as an oven,” and, Who, as says the prophet, may abide it? (Mal. 3:2; 4:1).

But let us not forget that the nobleman has returned “having received the kingdom,” and that the faithful servants have been promised their ten and their five cities. Therefore though the rebellious be thus judged, the scene of dominion is not to pass away in the judgment. The cities have been promised as the rewards of service, the kingdom has been received by the nobleman, and this earth, to which the nobleman returns (for the place of his return is the place of his kingdom), must remain for the exhibition of that kingdom, and to be the scene of those rewards. And therefore we

read in other scriptures that it is “all peoples, nations, and languages,” the peoples, nations, and languages of this earth which shall be given to the King and His servants. “The Son of Man shall be given dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him.” Judgment then shall be given to the saints of the Most High. “The saints shall judge the world” and shall possess the kingdom (see Dan. 7:13, 14, 22; 1 Cor. 6:2).

From all this then, we gather that this present dispensation is giving a family of children to the heavenly Father, and to the blessed Son of Man, companions in the glory of His throne. These are its purposes. By the ministry of the “witness to the truth,” which is the Son, and “the Spirit” which is the Holy Ghost, the saints are made sons and daughters, for whom are prepared the mansions in the Father's house. They are all one in the adoption of their heavenly Father, equally and surely belonging to Him, “all fitly framed together;” but in the inheritance of the glories of the coming kingdom (for which they are now getting ready) they are not one, as it is said to them, “Have thou authority over ten cities,” and “Have thou authority over five cities.”

And in this is the perfection of the ways of our God: for in this will be found all that quiets the soul while awakening it, all that would lead us forth to service, and yet never take us from our sweet retreat, the full assurance of our Father's equal love. Oh, that the love of Christ may constrain us more and more to be willing servants one of another! This is the only, real dignity, the only true praise. “I am among you as one that serveth,” said the Lord and Master of us all. Whatever the outward aspect and bearing of our life may be, the spirit of service should be the hidden principle. “If we be beside ourselves” —what should we still be able to say? “It is unto God” “If we be sober,” what should we still be able to say? “It is for your cause.” No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself. This is the only true rule of Christian action, this the hidden and only effectual spring to set all our movements right, as under God and like to Jesus.

(Continued from page 134.)

Chapter 80

A High Priest of Good Things to Come .1. —Hebrews 9

The worship of Israel, under the law, was on a principle of far greater distance from God than that of the fathers, when they sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange land. Wherever Abraham went in the land, he found room to pitch his tent, and build his altar; and there he called on the name of the Lord. The intercourse between Abraham and the Lord was much more free, and much more confidential, than any Israelite under the law could possibly attain to. Abraham knew the Lord only in grace. It was grace which had called him from his idolatry; and it was grace which had made him so many precious promises. And on this ground Abraham could stand before the Lord, and plead with Him for Sodom, although he was himself but dust and ashes.

But to man's eye, the service of God connected with the tabernacle, would be by far the most attractive. It would be thought an advance in the order of worship on the rude altar of the fathers. But the order of the tabernacle was, in fact, restriction on the liberty of worship. And yet it is to this that the human mind so constantly and naturally turns. This is the pattern which man proposes for himself; the necessary consequence of which is, that his worship is in the spirit of bondage. A devoted Israelite, though he stood purified as to the flesh, might have looked back with regret on the far happier and nearer worship of the fathers. After all that the high priest had done for him, he could only approach the outside of the tabernacle, he dare not enter within. The law, in all its institutions, preserved that element which was so conspicuous at its promulgation—bounds were set around the mountain, lest the people should break through to gaze. Near and intimate approach to God was unceasingly denied by some divinely appointed bound.

It is, indeed, true, that an Israelite enjoyed nearness to God, when compared with the inhabitants of the nations around him; for the world having fallen into idolatry after the flood, God had given it up to its own lusts; and having called out one nation, and constituted that a nation of worshippers of the true God, He thus distinguished them from all other nations on the earth. Thus Israel nationally stood before the Lord, and worshipped Him, whilst all other nations bowed before their idols.

But although, compared with others, Israel stood so nigh, they were nevertheless denied, by most solemn statutes, free access to the presence of their God. They must approach with measured steps, never passing the appointed limit. There was the outer circle of a worshipping people, and the inner circle of worshipping priests; while, nearest of all, and the only one who durst draw nigh, the high priest ministered alone in the holiest. Thus while Israel, as a nation, was taken from all other nations as God's peculiar heritage and witness, yet it was within that nation that God fixed the clearest testimony, that no way was yet opened into the holiest of all. Distance and restriction were most forcibly taught amidst the only nation brought nigh.

But Israel has become corrupt; and as God gave up the Gentiles to their lusts, so has He scattered for a time His chosen nation, and set aside its polity. Now corruption in worship has almost always consisted in re-establishing what God has disowned. Just, therefore, as natural religion is the assertion of man's ability to take that place before God as a creature, which as a sinner he has

lost, so national religion is the return to Judaism which God has disowned. People-worship without, and priest-worship within, is not now the order of God; nor has God now any other worshipping nation, than that which is formed by the whole body of believers, called out of every nation, and people, and tongue, to worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

But let us come to the tabernacle itself, to learn what is God's present order of worship, and what are the good things to come, which are now freely given to us. We have already noticed, that there were in Israel the worshipping people outside the tabernacle, and the worshipping priests within. It is with the latter we have now to do; for our present good things constitute blessed contrasts, even to the then privileges of the priests themselves. Let us dismiss, therefore, from our minds, the people worshipping without, whilst priestly ministry was accomplished within, and let us fix our attention, as the Holy Ghost in this chapter leads us to do, on the tabernacle itself, and the priestly family serving in its holy places.

The tabernacle was of most exquisite beauty. This could be discerned in some degree even by the eye of an outside worshipper. But the holy place, in which the priests habitually ministered, was furnished with the exquisitely wrought golden candlestick, the table of shewbread overlaid with gold, and the golden altar of incense. These things their eyes constantly looked upon, and they must have felt that they were amidst things peculiarly belonging to God, though denied entrance into that holy chamber in which God's glory visibly dwelt. They must have always felt near God, though never immediately in His presence. From the holiest of all, the beautiful veil still separated them. Into that most holy place, within which were the golden censer, the ark of the covenant, and the cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat, they never entered. They had no access to the mercy-seat. There was one indeed, the high priest, who had access even there—who could pass within the veil, and minister before the mercy-seat itself in the actual presence of God. But this was only once a year. At all other times Aaron could only minister among his priestly family in the holy place. Bounds were thus set, not only around, but also within the tabernacle; and set, not only on the priests, but even on the high priest himself.

Now let us well mark the comment of the apostle on this order of worship. “The priests go always into the first tabernacle accomplishing the service (of God); but into the second the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people, the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holies hath not yet been made manifest, while as the first tabernacle is yet standing.”

What could more forcibly testify, that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest, than such facts as that none but priests could enter the holy place? and that those very priests, so constantly serving there, could never pass on into the holiest and again, that the high priest himself must not enter “at all times” into the holiest, but only “once a year?” Enough, indeed, was permitted to constitute the tabernacle, and its order, a “shadow of good things to come;” but that tabernacle ever testified to those who worshipped in it, that it was but a figure for the time then present, and that it knew of no service by which, as to the conscience, they could be made perfect. Its holies were not thrown open even to those who had services appointed them therein: no liberty to go in and out was there allowed; no way to the mercy-seat, free to all, or open at all times, could be found there.

The annual solemnity of the great day of atonement must indeed have been bright in prospect, not only to the people and the priests, but to the high priest himself; but after it was over, it must have been a day much regretted, especially to him who had for that day such peculiar access unto God, but who was afterward cast into comparative distance from God to exercise his ministry outside the veil. Aaron's privilege was one of very seldom occurrence, only once a year.

But the Holy Ghost declares that now the way into the holies is open, through Jesus, the High Priest of good things to come. The redemption found by Aaron in the blood of bulls and goats did not avail to give access to the mercy-seat, nor to purge the worshipper's conscience; but Christ has found “eternal redemption;” and having thereon entered into the true holies, He has become the High Priest of those most precious “good things,” liberty and peace in the presence of God. As long as the first tabernacle was standing, these things could not be known—no redemption had been found on which they could be based—no high priest anointed by whom they could be ministered. The whole order of that first tabernacle spoke of restriction, not liberty; and so far from providing purgedness of conscience, its very offerings for sin brought the remembrance of sins upon the offerer.

And what then must be the consequence of taking the pattern of that tabernacle as the model for the worship of Christians? Must not the holiest, that is, the very presence of God, be barred against their approach? This must be so, even if they are allowed to be God's holy priesthood. But as this is not allowed, but only a certain class are admitted to be priests, the holy brethren must be denied all place whatsoever within the holies, and kept, like the congregation of Israel, without. Take the tabernacle and its order as the pattern instead of the contrast of Christian worship, and these consequences must result; and have they not abundantly resulted? Do we not see the laity without, the priestly clergy within? And are not souls fettered, and consciences unpurged, just as though the High Priest of good things to come had never entered on His blessed ministry at all?

But that High Priest has come! He is now the minister of the holy things; and, therefore, the blessed testimony of the Holy Ghost is, that “the good things to come” are present good things to faith. And what “a good thing to come” made present to us, that our abiding-place is now the holies, with the veil rent and thrown open, so that the mercy-seat is ever free to us, and the countenance of God ever lifted up upon us! What a present consequence to us of eternal redemption having been obtained, and of our great High Priest having passed through the heavens!

The priests in the tabernacle might have looked back to the freer communion with God enjoyed by the fathers, or they might have looked forward to a still more blessed thing, even the day when Israel shall nationally be a kingdom of priests, according to the promise, “Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord; men shall call you the ministers of our God;” but between these good things past away, and good things not yet come, they stood fettered and unpurged. But what they then looked forward to, as a good thing yet to come, is substantiated to us at present, because Christ has already entered on His ministry as the High Priest of good things to come. All Israel's blessings are suspended on Israel's new order of priesthood—of which priesthood the High Priest alone is actually in His heavenly place of ministry, His fellow-priests (that is, all who believe in His name) approaching there now only because He appears in the presence of God for them. But these priests do now, by faith, enjoy present liberty and perfect peace in that most holy presence,

though still, as to fact, sojourning and serving on earth. Israel nationally may be still beneath judicial darkness; the nominal church may be blindly, though industriously, groping amidst its own patterns of God's shadows; but the High Priest of the good things themselves having come, faith receives from His hand its rich and living portion, and renders back its praises unto God.

But let us look at other contrasts drawn in this chapter by the Holy Ghost.

As to the way in which the holiest of all was entered on the day appointed for that solemn service, how many preliminaries had to be attended to by Aaron! First, he must himself be provided with a sin-offering and a burnt-offering, as well as take of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin-offering, and one ram for a burnt-offering. Then he had to bring the bullock which was for himself, and to make an atonement for himself and for his house. This being done, he took a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the Lord, and put the incense on it, that the cloud of the incense might cover the mercy-seat; and under the shelter, and amidst the fragrance of this, he sprinkled the blood of his sin-offering both upon and before the mercy seat. But his work did not end here. He had to go out again, and to go through the same service for the people, offering their offerings as he had his own. And when the services of that day were completed, he must go out from the holiest, and again be occupied with his ceaseless round of ineffectual offerings—the holiest of all being closed against him until another year had run its course.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 81

A High Priest of Good Things to Come .2

Now, mark the contrast to all this. “But Christ, being come a High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in ONCE into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption.”

The Holy Ghost evidently delights to glorify the Lord Jesus. Others might have been anointed, but He is THE Christ—the Anointed One. That appellation belongs to the Son, as it belongs to no other. It is “Christ,” then, who is now present in his own place of ministry, as, “the High Priest of good things to come.” To enter into His place of ministry, He has passed through a far greater and more perfect tabernacle than that through which Aaron passed into his peculiar place of service. Christ has passed through the heavens. Man's hands were not employed to make these; they are the handy-work of God Himself. Christ is gone into heaven itself; there, in the immediate presence of God, He appears for us. On earth He was not a priest; no tabernacle ever existed on earth suited to so great a High Priest as Jesus the Son of God. Man's hands may not rear a place of ministry for this High Priest. His person and His sacrifice demand a sphere of ministry suited to their value, and hence His tabernacle is “not of this creation.” The attempt to honor Him with costly things made with hands is to forget the dignity of our High Priest, and the heavenly order of His priesthood.

Let us remember that He has passed through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not in His own individual right as divine and as perfect, but as a priest in connection with others. Had He entered simply in His own right, He might have demanded entrance, saying, “Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.” But He entered by His own blood, for He passed through as a priest. Aaron, on the great day of atonement, passed through the court and the holy place into the holiest with the basin of blood in his hands: this was the title on which he entered there—even the blood of the sin-offering. Aaron was taught that in this blood there was atonement for the sins of the people for the past year. Now Christ also entered through blood into the true tabernacle; but what says the Holy Ghost of Him whom He delights to honor? “Neither by the blood of bulls and goats, but by His own blood.” The blood of balls was suited to the tabernacle “of this building;” but such blood never could give title to worship in the tabernacle “not made with hands:” the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God, is required for that, and He himself also, as high priest, to carry it in. How constantly do we find that our highest blessings rest on the simplest truths! Our happy liberty of worship as saints, and our nearness unto God forever, hinge on the value before God of the blood of His Son. If we keep at a distance from God, if our consciences are unpurged in His presence, it is because we underrate the value of that blood, or forget what its once-offering has accomplished.

It is not to be wondered at that men should be ready to turn back to sanctification by ordinances; the flesh would, as it were, naturally cling to any order of things which seemed in any wise to sanction and to sanctify it. A system for the purification of the flesh would be tenaciously retained

by the flesh. But God has no such system now. He has tried man under it, and, his utter ruin having been there proved, He has forever set the flesh aside. Its claims and efforts spring therefore from its ignorance of itself, and of God's ways concerning it. God now has provided not for the flesh but for the conscience. He has no ordinance now by which the flesh may draw, in any degree, nigh: all these ordinances are gone forever; but He has given His own Son to bring in eternal redemption, and to give present peace and confidence in His presence. Hence God's grand object now is to glorify Jesus. He presents Him to us as the One in whom we shall find everything we need. And hence Christ must be all or nothing. He must be exalted, and man abased; for if man is set up, Christ has died in vain.

There is not only great power, but also great comprehensiveness in that word ONCE. It shows us that the offering of Jesus once comprised the fulfillment of all the typical sacrifices. Not only that His one sacrifice does this; but that the once offering of that one sacrifice did it. This is often forgotten, and hence many souls lack peace. They trust only the one sacrifice, and so have salvation; but they do not clearly see the effectual power its once offering had to “perfect forever them that are sanctified,” and so have not peace. It is very humbling and very sorrowful that it should be so, because this is the especial testimony of God concerning that once-offered sacrifice; but so it is, nevertheless. Gradual declension in the church opened the door for this practical unbelief, and bad teaching perpetuates it.

But let the saints of God remember, that as surely as there is but one Lamb of God, so surely the Lamb can be but once offered; and that, this one sacrifice having been once offered, “there remaineth no more offering for sin.”

Aaron, then, had to make many offerings; but Christ, by His once offering of Himself, has put away sin. He has consequently no more priestly work to do as the offerer of sacrifice for sin. To say that He has is to say that He has the cross to go through again as the victim, and that He has again to enter into the holiest by His own blood. And this would instantly nullify God's testimony as to the preciousness of that blood, and the work it has already done. For, I must repeat, His testimony is not merely that Christ's blood alone cleanses from sin, but that the once shedding of that blood has so entirely put away sin, that God now says to all who believe therein, “your sins and iniquities I will remember no more.”

That the one and once-offered sacrifice of Christ did, because of the preciousness of His blood, fulfill all the typical sacrifices, is indeed plainly seen in verse 14 of this chapter; for we here have that He is set as the fulfillment, not only of the type of the blood offered on the day of atonement, but also as the fulfillment of the ashes of the red heifer. The law had its numberless forms of purification of the flesh, but all these combine to enhance the value of Christ's blood as once shed and once carried in by Him to God. By that one shedding, and one presentation, we have had accomplished for our consciences forever, what any or all the shadows effected for the flesh for a time. “If,” says the Holy Ghost, “the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, Who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

What a ransom, then, has Christ found! By that blood which He once shed on the cross, He has put away sin: that blood He has once, and once for all, carried into the true holiest. And must He

repeat His work, as did Aaron, as though that blood had, after a little while, lost its efficacy? No. When He comes out again, it will not be to continue or repeat any work for sin, but “unto salvation.” He has found eternal redemption, and has entered into the presence of God as a consequence of His having done so. What a blessed alteration in the statute! What Aaron did every year for Israel, and yet never did effectually, Christ has done once for all for us. The saints of God, therefore, stand on the ground of accomplished purification. Just as truly as the ordinances of old did bring a people in the flesh into a certain kind of purification before God, so truly, yea, “much more” so, has that one sacrifice of Christ brought all who believe into the unspeakable and eternal blessing of having “no more conscience of sins.” They may realize this, or they may not; but this is what Christ has obtained for them by His one offering.

And just, therefore, as it would have been sinful unbelief for an Israelite of old who had touched a dead body, to doubt that the uncleanness was gone when the ordinance of the sprinkled ashes had been observed by him, so is it nothing else than sinful unbelief, for one of God's children now to doubt, that all his sin and guilt has been forever atoned for and put away by the once offered sacrifice of Christ. Full faith in that sacrifice banishes conscience of sins. God delights in having provided this for us. He would have us serve Him in freedom, not in bondage. He never took pleasure in any sacrifice for sins until one was offered which put sins away forever, and gave to the consciences of His worshippers peace in His presence.

In that holy presence, therefore, we stand realizing the everlasting results of Christ's great day of atonement. The question of sin has been met by Him on our behalf—met and settled forever; and, having put it away, He is now unto us the blessed minister of unmingled and eternal blessing. Christ's present position, and our present blessings, are thus alike the consequences of our sins having been purged. Can anything be more blessed than this! That we should, through faith, have already entered on our everlasting nearness to God, and are now privileged to know the peace proper to the heavenly sanctuary! The true tabernacle is free to us—as free now as it will be when we stand personally amidst its glories. We belong to that priestly family anointed for its holies; not limited to a holy place, nor serving before a veiled mercy-seat, nor having brief access into the holiest, but made meet for heaven itself, and worshipping with pare consciences in the immediate presence of God!

And do we prize as we should this blessing of a purged conscience? Do we discern the peculiar grace marking its bestowment? It was entirely unknown to worshippers under the law; not only unknown to the congregation who worshipped without, but equally so to the priests who served within. That first tabernacle must ever have been a house of bondage to conscience. Conscience can never be purged by what fails to bring nigh unto God. As long as full reconciliation was not known—as long as sin was found more effectual to exclude from God, than sacrifice for sin was to bring nigh to God—so long conscience could have known no purification. And not only people but priests, yea, not only priests but even the high priest, must have had sin, not salvation, brought to remembrance by their constantly recurring sacrifices. Expiation, full and entire expiation, there was not; for had there been, the demand for expiation would have ceased. This thought must have continually forced itself on all worshipping under the shadows; and in proportion as conscience was tender and exercised, so would it be sensible of its unpurgedness. Such might fully understand that the flesh was purified for admission into that tabernacle by the appointed blood of bulls and of goats, while at the same time their consciences might be carrying a load of guilt, for

which, in such blood, they found no remedy. But now it is not merely the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. A purged conscience is, therefore, the distinctive blessing of the saints in this dispensation. A saint who has it not has forgotten, or (it may be through carelessness) has lost what became his, when, by faith, he passed beneath the blood-sprinkled lintel. “No more conscience of sins” is one of the very first good things bestowed on us by our blessed High Priest; and God has provided through Him for its maintenance; for if that be not maintained, God well knows that we cannot worship Him in spirit and in truth. It is the everlasting efficacy of Christ's own blood, once carried in by Himself unto God, which secures this. All we need in order to its constant enjoyment is simple faith in that presented blood.

But though all we need in order to a purged conscience is simple faith in what Christ's blood has effected, we are to exercise ourselves to maintain a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man; and the saint of God, who, walking in the Spirit, seeks to maintain this good conscience, will be the most sensible of his many defects and failures, and so will most realize the blessedness of the purged conscience provided for him by the blood of Jesus. Such a saint will be quick of sense to detect defilement; he will feel a soil that others are insensible to. Everything around us is tainted with death. Nature itself is defiled. The very charities of life have power to defile and deaden the soul. And to all this the Holy Ghost, Who dwelleth in us, seeks to make us sensitive. If, therefore, there was not this ever effective provision for purgedness of conscience, the saint walking most in the Spirit would be bowing his head like a bulrush, and in terror before God, because conscious of so many defilements; though to others all would appear so fair and so devoted. Blessed indeed, therefore, to such is the High Priest of good things to come. Blessed lessons, both concerning holiness and concerning sin, does His work for them enable them to learn; for all that they are learning of the purity of God, and of the more subtle and refined deceitfulness of their own hearts, only serves to prove to them the necessity, and to confirm to them the value, of that blood by which they are redeemed and sanctified unto God. These are lessons of which the careless or unexercised soul is ignorant.

Let it be remembered, therefore, that every type of cleansing finds its fulfillment in the death and resurrection of Christ. It is not the work of the Spirit to purify, but to testify to the blood of Christ as purifying. The Holy Ghost comes to the saints as the witness of their cleanness, not as the producer of it. That Christ has already and forever effected that, is the burden of the Spirit's testimony to conscience: in this the Holy Ghost delights to declare the honor of Jesus. Just, therefore, as we simply receive His testimony, will our consciences be really purged.

I would add that it is not to the great and blessed doctrines of election and the like, or to the unfailingness of God's purposes, that the Holy Ghost specifically points the conscience in order to its purging, but expressly to God's estimate of the blood of Christ. For other precious purposes He does discourse to the saints on those blessed doctrines; but for the especial purpose of giving and of maintaining a purged conscience, He invariably directs the soul to Christ's blood, as provided by God's infinite love for that very end.

The present portion, therefore, of the saints is to be ever in the true tabernacle, and to be there with a purged conscience. He is never an outside worshipper, nor an uncleansed one. Man's best efforts at worship only keep him at a distance from the living God: ordinances, however precious in

their place, have the like tendency, just as they are, used to bring nigh. This accounts for the ceaseless and restless labor of those who trust to them; for they heap burdens on conscience in the vain effort to relieve it, and entangle themselves but the more in the trammels from which they straggle to be free. It is the blood of Christ alone which frees from every fetter, and gives, at the same moment, liberty and an everlasting home in the happy presence of God.

Here, then, we have two marvelous blessings connected with the priesthood of Christ: the first, access into the true holies, and abiding there as our ordinary place of worship; the other, perpetual purification of conscience through the blood of Jesus, even on the mercy-seat itself. It is on these two established privileges of the household of faith that our worship depends.

But there are other of the good things to come, made present to us through the priesthood of Jesus, mentioned in this chapter. For example: we have a house of worship everlastingly purified. Atonement was made of old for the holy sanctuary, and for the tabernacle of the congregation, as well as for the priests; and we are here told that, as it was necessary that those patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with the then appointed sacrifice, so was it necessary that the heavenly things themselves should be purified with better sacrifices than those; “for Christ is not entered into holies made with hand, which are figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

Now it is His having gone to appear for us there, which has rendered this purification of the heavenlies necessary. God is not only jealous of His own personal holiness, and so provides for the personal cleanness of those whom He brings into His presence; but He is also jealous of the purity of heaven, His dwelling place; and hence heaven also is purified by blood, that the entrance of sinners into it may in no wise defile it. And it greatly assures the priestly worshippers to find that they themselves are purified by that same blood, which thus preserves the purity of God's own dwelling-place and throne. One purification avails for all—God's throne, God's temple, God's High Priest, and God's priests! For can we really think of heaven itself being our proper place of worship, without fearing that we may carry defilement into it? Do we not feel that we should tarnish and soil those pure and heavenly courts? Well, God has met this fear too': the true holies cannot be defiled, for they have been purified forever by the blood of Jesus. Thus has God prepared us for His presence, and His presence for us. All is done. Every plea that unbelief can put forth, for shrinking into the darkness which it loves, is disposed of forever by this all-effectual blood!

“Having therefore, brethren, liberty to enter into the holies by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He dedicated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and (having) a great priest over the house of God; 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!” J. L. H.

(Concluded from page 95.)

Chapter 82

Jehovah Jesus, Son of David and Son of God: Part 1

In reading the Holy Scriptures we should remember that they do not simply contain a rule of life and conduct, but that they are a revelation of God, so as to lead us into the knowledge of Him in Jesus Christ, and thus into life eternal. He that was “in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” “I have manifested Thy name,” says the Lord, “unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world.” They do assuredly exhibit a rule of life; and as such not a jot or tittle of them is to be disregarded (Matt. 5:18); but if they be received merely as such, our souls will not come into contact with the great purpose of God in giving them forth. We are renewed in knowledge—knowledge of God in Christ, through the Spirit; and therefore the effort of the god of this world is to hinder the light of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, from shining into us; and, on the other hand, the prayer of the apostle, for the church, is that they might receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and that they might increase in the knowledge of God (Eph. 1:1'7; Col. 1:10). Oh that all saints may find their happiest occupation in searching out the ways of their faithful God, redeeming their time from the vain pursuits of the world thus to converse with Him! Let us remember however, that it is the willing and obedient heart, and not the acute intellect, that makes safe and profitable progress in this knowledge. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him” (Psa. 25:14). “The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein” (Psa. 111:2).

The sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow, form, as we are told, the great burthen of the scriptures. The Spirit in the prophets testified of these; and surely they do constitute the center of the blessed, wondrous, and gracious purpose or plan of our God in His dealings with us.

Concerning this glory, which was thus to follow the sufferings of Christ, 1 desire to trace two portions or characters of it signified to us by two of His many titles—

SON OF DAVID; SON OF GOD.

And oh, for more of the mind of Christ—more too of the sweet power of friendship with Jesus, that we all may thus be more apt to learn from Him the things which He has heard from the Father (John 15:15)!

The purpose of God, in His election of Israel as His nation, was the assertion of His own right to all power on earth; or, in other words, for the manifestation of Christ, as the heir and holder of all earthly glory and dominion.

His dispensation, by means of Israel no doubt, was made to answer other purposes; as for instance, it answered the purpose of drawing out, in still broader and brighter lines, the evidences of man's weakness and degradation through the fall; that though favored, as man was among the Jews, in the most special ways of providence, yet was he found to be without strength, unable to stand unrebukeable before God; and thus it gave us further to know, that God Himself must sustain us, and work in and for us. And then it answered the other purpose of witnessing that God could, in grace, thus sustain us, and thus work in and for us Himself; for it presented shadows of

good things to come: the law, as well as the prophets of Israel, prophesied of Jesus (Matt. 11:13). But the characteristic purpose of God in the dispensation of Israel, appears to have been to vindicate His own name—the name of Jehovah, as the only God of the whole earth, the only Lord of the lower parts of the earth. For in Israel, Christ or Jehovah was economically or virtually on the throne. A theocracy, as it is commonly admitted, was established among them; and the history of Israel was to have shown, and but for their unbelief and rebellion, would have shown, that “blessed were the people who had the Lord for their God.” They were “set on high above all nations of the earth.” “What nation is there,” said Moses, “so great, that hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all that we call upon Him for” (Deut. 4:7)? And so Joshua could afterward stand before Israel, and witness, in like manner, the mercy of Jehovah to them as His nation: “the Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong; but as for you no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day” (Josh. 23:9).

Thus was Israel established to be God's witness on earth; they were His people, politically united with Him as their King. And being thus the earthly people of God, their blessings were blessings of the earth, blessings of providence, as it is written, “all these blessings shall come upon them” (Deut. xxviii. 1-14).

And they should have continued thus to flourish as God's nation, “their time should have remained forever” (Psa. 81:15). But the children of Israel revolted from their King, they rejected Jehovah, as Christ, that He should not reign over them (1 Sam. 8:7).

When Israel, thus with revolted heart, would have a king, after the Lord had made trial of the son of Cis (the mystical import of whose reign, though deeply interesting and instructive, I need not here consider), He gave them David to be their king, a man after His own heart. By the arms of David the enemies of God and of His Israel were all reduced; and then, full of honor and as established to the furthest limits of the promised land, the throne and kingdom of David are delivered over to his son Solomon, that he might hold them as glorious in the eyes of the nations; and thus was the throne of David constituted a second witness of God's authority and power on earth. But the house of David, like Israel before, speedily corrupted itself, and after long patience, God removed them from their place, taking power from them, and allowing it to pass over to the heathen who were not His people; and there it has been ever since, passing from one to another of the four Beasts of the prophets. And thus has the Lord been left without a due or appointed witness to His glory as Lord of the earth. But scripture very largely tells us that Israel is to revive as from their present state of death, and be established by Christ and under Christ (Who is the Faithful Witness to the glory of the Father) in the person, and with all the rights, of “Son of David:” and to His hand earthly power and glory shall be found to be securely committed, to the glory of God the Father.

I have thus anticipated what I understand from scripture to be the special characteristic glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, as “Son of David;” it presents Him to us as the restorer and holder of power on earth. This name or title appears to have its origin in the words of Nathan, the prophet of God, to David (see 2 Sam. 7:8-16).

This word of Nathan distinctly appoints the son of David to be the head of that house and kingdom which the Lord would Himself establish in the earth forever. Psa. 89 celebrates the same grace of God to David's seed. Now a comparative view of 2 Sam. 7:14 with Heb. 1:5, of Psa. 132:11 with Acts 2:30, and of Isa. 4:3 with Acts 13:34, will at once assure us that Christ, and not Solomon, is

really and substantially the Son of David, both in the oracle of Nathan and in the Psalm I have referred to. And I would add just this—that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of David, not as Head of His mystical body the church, but as Head of the restored tribes of Israel; for the church never has been, and indeed never could be forsaken of her God as the prophet there threatens, and the psalmist there complains (Psa. 89); but Zion is now really the Forsaken, and her land the Desolate (Isa. 62:4). Besides, the Lord Jesus often admitted His claim to this title, and, when He stood before the Roman governor, confessed Himself to be the King of the Jews. And the Angel, announcing His birth, spake of David as His Father, and David's throne as His. In this character of the Son of David the Lord offered Himself to Israel at His first coming; but Israel cast Him out then, as they had done before in the days of Samuel. We learn this from the parable of the wicked Husbandmen. For we learn there distinctly that the mission of the Son of God to earth was designed, among its many blessed purposes, to prove whether Israel could still be continued in possession of the vineyard under the care and government of Him Who was the heir of it, for the disallowing of Whose title to which was the vineyard taken from them.

So the Lord's last solemn entry into Jerusalem was in the character of the Son of David; and therefore was He accompanied on that occasion with the suitable acclamations—Hosanna to the Son of David, God save the king. But the rulers and representatives of the people, being then offended in Him, not discerning the glory of the kingdom in the person of the lowly Jesus of Nazareth, He left them as ripe for present judgment (and which judgment they have ever since been suffering), giving them to know that they should not see Him till in the spirit of repentance and faith they had learned to welcome Him, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,” (see Matt. 21-23). These words of welcome the Lord advisedly takes from Psa. 118, this being the song of Israel in the joyous and triumphant day, when they shall bring in Jesus as the Head Stone with shoutings of “Grace, grace,” to Him; and the shout of a king, according to the prophecy, shall be eminently among them (Num. 23:21).

So that beautiful prophecy contained in Isa. 7-9 instructs us in the same truth. When the prophecy was delivered, Syria and Ephraim were confederated against Judah; and Isaiah was commissioned to sustain the courage of the house of David, by an assurance to it that the confederacy should not prevail; and by more than that. For the discomfiture of the then present confederacy was made a pledge of the discomfiture of all succeeding confederacies, at least so as to secure to the house of David in the end rest and glory, though for a season it might lie in ruins and dishonor; and that “a Child” in due time should be “born,” and “a Son” be “given,” Whose right it was, and Whose right should be asserted, on that throne of David to sit, and his kingdom and government to order and establish forever. And how splendidly do the hopes of Israel sparkle on that page of scripture! “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace: of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment, and with justice from henceforth forever and ever.”

Psa. 72 is another beautiful exhibition of the doings and glories of Christ in the character of the Son of David: and Isa. 25 presents us, as it were, with a sample of the peaceable fruit from the reign of His scepter of righteousness.

This title of “Son of David” was indeed the highest in which Christ was made known to the faith of the Jews, merely as Jews (see Matt. 22:42); and therefore as we have already seen, it was as the Son of David that the multitude congratulated Him on His royal visitation to Jerusalem (Matt. 21). So we may observe that Bartimaeus manifested his faith in contrast with the ignorance of the multitude; for while Jesus was known to them merely as “Jesus of Nazareth” (being thus distinguished, just as all men are by a specified place, parentage, or other circumstance), He was known to Bartimaeus as “Son of David,” and appealed to as such for mercy. And justly so; for, according to the Jews themselves, the Son of David was to bring the mercy which Bartimaeus needed (Matt. 12:23); and also according to the prophets. For as Son of David, the restorer of the human earthly system, He is to come with a recompence, He is to come and save the people; and the eyes of the blind are to be opened, and the ears of the deaf to be unstopped (Isa. 35:3, 4). In like manner the woman, who came to Jesus from the coasts of Tire and Sidon, appealed to Him for mercy, as the Son of David. Now she presents to us a sample of the faith in which the nations are to stand, in the day when the tabernacle of David, which is now in ruins, shall be set up, and the residue of men shall shall seek after the Lord. For the Gentiles will then acknowledge Israel as the “children,” the “natural branches,” and will acquiesce in God's appointment of the “first dominion,” to the daughter of Zion—in the Lord's settling of everything in favor of the Jew first. So this woman commends her faith to the Son of David, in the same spirit, really taking a place under the children's table (Matt. 15:28).

(To be continued.)

Chapter 83

Jehovah Jesus, Son of David and Son of God: Part 2

Now Peter's faith apprehended the person of the blessed Jesus in a character different from that of the Son of David; he was taught by the Spirit to discern in Him a glory beyond a mere Jewish or earthly glory. He made confession to Him as “the Son of the living God;” and therefore, and at once, the Lord committed to Him the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:16). Because, as I believe, while Jesus as Son of David is the head of earthly power and glory, as Son of God He is head of all power in heaven, the Dispenser of those which are in the ■πουραν■οις or heavenlies. And this leads me to consider, as I proposed to do, the second title of our blessed and adorable Savior, “Son of God.”

In a divine sense, I assuredly believe our Lord Jesus bears this title. He is called Son of God, when His full, unqualified, eternal Deity is expressed, when revealed as one with the Father and the Holy Ghost (three Persons in one God). For John says, “Therefore the Jews sought to kill Him, because He had not only broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father;” making Himself equal with God (John 5:18). And again, after speaking largely of Himself as Son of God, He closes with assuming full divine glory, saying, “before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). And the divine dignity of this title clearly appears from John 10:30-39, and from 1 John 1; 2. Indeed on the truth, that there is Father and Son in the Godhead, the very life of the Christian seems to depend; for this life is fellowship with God in love; which will be found to be fellowship with the Father and the Son. “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father” (1 John 2:23). “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9).

But still, in another sense, the holy scriptures speak of Him as Son of God; and this is in immediate connection in result with us as incarnate and risen, as the eldest of the family in heaven, the First-born among many brethren. Now let us look for the origin of this title, as we did before for that of “Son of David.”

As our blessed Lord walked on earth, He was a circumcised man, debtor to do the whole law. He was made, as we read, “under the law,” and to the utmost tittle of it was obedient to it, so that Be presented a righteousness in flesh to God; as He died on the cross a Lamb without blemish. But by resurrection He entered into another condition, being then declared to be Son of God with power, having thereby proved that He, a Son of Man, had the life of God in Him, life superior to the power of death. And we must ever remember, for it is a doctrine insisted on most fully, I might say in all parts of the apostolic scriptures, that it is with the Lord in His resurrection that the saints have their union. It is as first-born from the dead, that He is the head of His body the church (Col. 1:18), The life in His members is not, if I may call it, legal or Jewish life, life of circumcised flesh, but life through the Spirit; a circumcision made without hands, divine life, eternal life, life of the risen Head. They have become “children of God, being born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Now when Jesus left this world, He went to the Father—into the Father's house, there to prepare a place for His brethren (John 14:1). “He ascended to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God;” and has gained for us sinners (blessed be His name for such riches of grace, such everlasting and satisfying consolations) that we should be loved of the Father, with the same love wherewith He Himself is loved (John 17:26).

Being thus the brethren of the ascended Jesus, Son of God, the saints having the Spirit and life of their Head, sit even now in Him in heavenly places; their citizenship is in heaven; by Him they have access to God, as a Father through the Spirit. They belong to Him that is raised from the dead, and thus bring forth fruit unto God. And being now the sons of God, the world knows them not, even as it knew not Christ; for they are not of the world, even as He was not of the world. And as He is, so are they in this world; they have in Spirit followed Him out of this world into heaven. The blessings, therefore, wherewith they are blest, are blessings not of this world, or of the earth, as we have seen the Jews' were, but “spiritual blessings in the heavenlies;” as it is written, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in the heavenlies, in Christ; 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, having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Eph. 1:3-6).

And as children, now in the Father's house, they are waiting for the inheritance of the children, for “if children, then heirs;” they are hoping for the grace which is to be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ. And as Jesus Himself is now crowned with glory, and seated at the right hand of God, as a kind of pledge of His future dominion (Psa. 110:1, Heb. 2:8, 9), so His brethren here, His members still suffering on earth, have received the Holy Ghost, the fruit of this His glory and exaltation to heaven, as the earnest or pledge of their inheritance with Him (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13, 14.)

Now of what are the sons of God to be the heirs? Surely of the same glory of which the First-born among them is Heir, as it is written “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ;” and again, “for our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, Who shall change our vile bodies into the likeness of His glorious body;” and again, “when Christ Who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.” So that the kingdom, prepared by the Father for the Son, is to be the scene of the common glory and joy of the blessed “family in heaven,” the portion of the children of whom He is the First-born: all are to be in the Father's house, and seated on the Son's throne (John 14:2, Rev. 3:21). Their inheritance is heavenly; “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Therein will be the glory of the celestial, which is one, inasmuch as they shall be presented in the likeness of the risen and glorified body of Jesus, and have their place manifestly there where now in Spirit they dwell, that is, the Father's house in the heavenlies, the place of the children; while the glory of the restored Israel will be here that of the terrestrial which is another, inasmuch as in bodies of flesh and blood they shall occupy the earth, the place of the servants, the footstool and

not the throne, the place of subjects under Christ, and not the seat of government with Christ. And thus in the manifestation of the sons of God, in the dispensation of the fullness of times when all things in heaven and in earth shall be gathered together in one, even in Christ, He Who once descended into the lower parts of the earth, and then ascended up far above all heavens, shall, according to the decree of the everlasting covenant, fill all things, shall be brought forth in the earthly glory of Son of David, and in the heavenly glory of the Son of God; His risen saints and restored nation having their several associations with Him, “of Whom every family in heaven and earth is named,” and “every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

This, His glory, as filling all things in heaven and in earth, the Lord appears to anticipate in a very early stage of His ministry, as we read in the first chap. of John's Gospel. When Nathaniel believed, he made a large and blessed confession to the glory of Christ, “Rabbi,” says he, “Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And He said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, [hereafter] ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” From this confession to Him as Son of God and King of Israel, the Lord catches, as it were, the glimpse of His then far distant glory, as the Center, and Mediator, and Life of all things in heaven and in earth, in Whom all things are to consist, and be gathered; though they are still to be distinct as things heavenly, and things earthly.

Thus then there does appear to me to be most clearly recognized in scripture a distinct purpose with God in His dispensation of Israel and of the glorified; in other words, in the manifestation of the Christ (Who is God's ordinance for all His purposes, to Whom be glory forever!) as Son of David and as Son of God. But as I judge that a practical conclusion, on a subject interesting to us all who desire to know and do the will of our gracious God and Savior, very much rests on a just apprehension of this distinction, I desire to add a little more upon it. And I do it in much subjection to my brethren in the Lord, knowing indeed but in small part, and therefore able to speak but as so knowing. However, I speak according to clear conclusions of my own mind.

In the Jewish dispensation, Christ spake on earth, but now He is speaking from heaven (Heb. 12:25). The position of the Head being thus changed, the position of His elect, as those who are gathered to Him, and who are to witness to Him, must be also changed. And so I judge, we shall find from the word of God that it has changed. As for instance, Israel was to go forth, as on earth, with “a two-edged sword in their hand,” utterly to destroy city after city; the church, “with power from on high” to subdue sinners to the God of the spirits of all flesh. The characteristic action of Israel may be read in such a passage as this— “So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings, he left none remaining but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded,” Israel being made the witness of God's glory among the nations, and the rod of His anger. But the characteristic action of the church or saints, on the contrary, may be read in these words— “Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places.” Their conflict is with a world that lies in the wicked one, with him that has the power of death; and their strength lies only through the Spirit in

the name of the Lord, in the name of Him Who is not now on earth as He was when, in the ark of Israel, He arose and His enemies were scattered, and they who hated Him fled before Him; or as when He headed the Lord's host as their Captain before the walls of Jericho.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 84

Jehovah Jesus, Son of David and Son of God: Part 3

So the characteristic confession of Israel before God was this, “a Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation great, mighty, and populous; and the Egyptians evil-entreated us and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage; and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice and looked on our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression; and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness.” This was a confession that they, who were bond slaves in a strange land, had been blessed with the fullness of all earthly good. But the confession of the saints is expressed by the cry “Abba Father;” a confession that they, who had been alienated from the life of God, are now brought nigh, and made sons, and have the life and Spirit of sons sent forth into their hearts.

So the characteristic glory of Israel may be seen in such a chapter as 2 Chron. 9; where king Solomon is admired in the eyes of all the nations, passing all the kings of the earth, as he then did, in riches and wisdom, all of them seeking his presence, and bringing him offerings, while that of the church may be seen (far, far different) in the description thus given of the early saints at Jerusalem. “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things that he possessed was his own, but they had all things common; and with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.”

I do confess that this view of the divers glories of our Lord Jesus Christ, as Son of David and Son of God, thus distinguishing the proper characteristic purpose of each dispensation, Jewish and Christian, leads me very distinctly to the conclusion, that the church of the New Testament saints is not to concern itself with the regulation of the earth; that it comes down from its only due position, as ascended into heaven in its Head, when it links itself with the powers and authorities of the world for the purpose of managing the world's interests, or preserving its good order. For her Head, to Whom and to Whose position she is to witness, we must still repeat it, is not on earth, but in heaven; and is not directly undertaking, for the present, the management of a kingdom which is of this world. Nor will He, until He regain dominion in Israel, and be seated on the throne of David, His only recognized organ of earthly power and rule. But He is not in this position yet; “now is my kingdom not from hence.” “He came to His own but His own received Him not.” He was offered to Israel as their King; for that word of the prophet was fulfilled, “tell ye the daughter of Zion, behold thy King cometh unto thee.” But Israel cast the heir of the vineyard out saying, “come let us kill Him” Then did God the Father exalt this rejected Stone, taking Him up far above all heavens. Jesus, by the Jewish enmity was chased, as it were, from earth to heaven; but the Father has made this wrath of man to praise Him, and has by occasion of it, constituted Jesus the Head of all things in heaven; for now the rejected stone, the descended and ascended Savior, shall in due time be manifested as the head of the corner, the filler of all things in heaven as well as on earth. Israel gave up their testimony to their head on earth, by losing their separate place as God's nation, acknowledging other lords than Jehovah, and selling themselves to the kingdoms of the

Gentiles. The church gives up her testimony to her Head in heaven, by settling herself down in the earth, and combining with the powers and principles of the world, too ungraciously forgetful that her blessed suffering Lord was cast out by the world, and given no place on earth.

Many, “beloved in the Lord,” are found in a system which professedly makes the church the minister of civil order; the state, in return, the patron of the church. This is clearly, in my judgment, an unwarranted condition for the church to be found in; and thus, as far as the influence of this judgment extends, I am necessarily separated from them. I might speak of much in the details of the same system, from which I feel constrained to withdraw myself, being, as I judge, anti-scriptural, and not merely non-scriptural; such as the church requiring her ministers to recognize all her baptized children as dying equally in the true hope of eternal life; but it is not my wish or purpose to go into any such details, but to state simply this one foundation principle. But then how am I to view this separation? how am I to be affected by it? When I say, as unfeignedly I do, that in many things they honor their Lord and love Him with a constant and fervent love, how dare I view it, or how can I be affected by it, but as a cause of much humiliation before our common Lord and Master, and with great sorrow of heart? With many of them, if they will let me thus claim with them sympathy in Jesus, I take constant and most sweet counsel, and do confess that their Christian spirit and deportment will at times make me pause and ask myself, Could I be right in formally withdrawing from public recognized communion with such saints of God? But then the scripture of truth, which is to be the rule rather than the suggestions of our affections, never brings me to this pause, nor awakens a doubt of the untenableness of their position; and therefore, though we have many brethren to love, we have but one Lord to obey.

I grant we have to listen to the church, as a brother has lately, I think well, insisted on. I do not deny the discretionary power which he has in a very interesting and instructive manner advocated, but the church's discretion must ever be regulated by the written mind of her great Head (the wife is subject to the law of her husband); and the establishment, not to speak here of many of her ordinances, which clearly appear to me to be much more than merely non-scriptural, as I have submitted, takes a position not only unwarranted by the scriptures, but plainly opposed to the views which they present of the church of Christ. But if I do thus honor these brethren, who are still in the establishment, as among the Lord's dearest and most honored servants in this day of ours, can I allow myself in anything that may appear to be a rejoicing in, or exulting because of, this separation? Can I say of any given communion, to the exclusion of these brethren, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these?” Assuredly I could not do so. I could not adopt any judgment that would thus have them on the outside.

But I must at the same time say, that I do not feel indebted to the system with which these brethren are connected for the Christian zeal and temper which grace them. I am very far from being able to see, as is commonly observed among us, and urged too as a strong persuasive for continuing in the establishment, that the Lord is thus marking it with His approbation, and honoring it by having such servants of His in it. Were this so, we should naturally look for the brightest exhibitions of Christian zeal and temper in those who were most subject to the system, if by the system itself the Lord were working among us, and putting honor upon it as His own ordinance. But the contrary is glaringly the fact. It is in those who are, every day, in various ways, asserting a measure of independency, and working out of the recognized rule, that the energy of the Spirit chiefly manifests itself; while much of mere formality, and the substitution of respectability among men for

the patience of Jesus, will be found there, where the system is most exactly enforced. I think I am conscious that I do not desire to be a judge, but some things are too plain not to be read by even those who run.

And while I thus clearly and thankfully acknowledge what is of the Lord's spirit in these brethren, I will also acknowledge, that, because the world, in its spirit and practice, has been so much retained, while separation from it, in its religious services, has been so formally adopted, little of the blessing and power of God does now rest on those who are now called Dissenters. We are all weak, by reason of much unfaithfulness—much individual personal unfaithfulness from all of us, more or less, seeking our own, and not the things that are Jesus Christ's." And oh! will not these things, in the judgment of the Lord, overweigh correct ideas or clear views, as they are too often boasted to be, of the nature and government of a Christian church? What are correct ideas and clear views, "being alone?" There is such a thing as, by letter and circumcision, transgressing the law. What spirit can God recognize with His blessing in such a state of things as the present, of weakness as respects the saints individually, and of distraction as respects them together, but that of sighing and crying, that of sympathy with Jesus weeping over Jerusalem? Was it not comely in David to mourn for Saul, and to slay the Amalekite who brought him tidings of his death, thinking in the pride and naughtiness of his heart, that he should be rewarded for his misplaced zeal? And shall we, instead of this mourning, glory in that which is enough, even more than the death of king Saul, to make the enemies of God to rejoice, the daughters of the uncircumcised to triumph? For surely the beauty of our Israel is departed, and brethren, such as David and Jonathan, are kept asunder by the false and apostate principles that are corrupting us throughout. Let us judge the systems of the day to be as bad as they can be: the worse they are, the less proper objects are they for our exulting over. Oh! let us not lie against the truth; such zeal comes not from above. Let us rather strengthen the things that remain among us by humbleness of mind and confession before our God, knowing that our present distractions arise rather by reason of the worldliness and unbelief that are in the hearts of us, the professed servants of God, than from any external causes. Let us learn our individual responsibility to do what we can for a speedy recovery of some of that goodliness which has been lost to us; or, at least, that the little that remains perish not.

Let us embrace all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, lest we be keeping ourselves out of the scope and range of the fullness of the blessing of the gospel, for peace is pronounced on all such. Let us cease from judging one another, and rather set ourselves to exhort one another to love and to good works, reminding one another that, if we sow bountifully, we shall also reap bountifully. Let our hope enter into that within the vail, let us cast out our anchor there, and wish for the day, the day of the Lord, remembering that "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." And therefore let each ask himself, Am I ever in spirit saying, "Come, Lord Jesus," as a faithful soul that has given itself to the Lord? Am I looking for His return with those longing desires, "make haste my beloved, be thou like to a roe or to a young hart on the mountains of spices?"

I would desire, with one heart and voice, to join my beloved brethren in the establishment, and say "Almighty God, may it please Thee of thy gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of Thine elect, and to hasten Thy kingdom; that we, with all those who are departed in the true faith of Thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in Thine eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

APPENDIX.

The restoration of the kingdom of Israel, under the Son of David, is the special fruit of the resurrection of Jesus; the ascension serves the uses of this present dispensation (Eph. 4:8). Accordingly Peter makes a distinction between these things, telling us that the resurrection was required because of the promises made to David's throne, and that the ascension was required because of the promise of the Holy Ghost to the church (Acts 2). The prophets, in accordance with this, commonly present the hopes and revival of Israel under the figure of resurrection (Isa. 26:19, Ezek. 37, Hos. 6:2); and it appears that the Jews regarded the Messiah, the resurrection, and the kingdom, as substantially one and the same thing (see John 11:25-27. Luke 23:42).

Resurrection, in these observations, I advisedly distinguish from ascension. In many senses I know they are treated in scripture as the same. But here, by resurrection, I mean our blessed Lord's return from the grave to the earth; and, by ascension, His return from earth to heaven. It would have served the purposes of this dispensation had the Lord at once gone from the grave to heaven; for it is in Him, as in heaven, that the church finds her direct and immediate interest (Rom. 5:10, 2 Cor. 4:10, Eph. 4:8, Col. 3:1, Heb. 3:1; 4:14. vii. 25, x. 12, 1 John 2:1). She is maintained and is to come to her full stature by the virtues of the ascended Jesus; for as such He is the head of life, and dispenser of the Spirit to His members; but it is the kingdom of Israel which is to manifest the direct fruit of the resurrection, inasmuch as it is to witness Christ on earth again, the head of the nations, the restorer of the earthly human system—Son of David.

Our Lord Jesus clearly recognized Himself as Son of David, for He answered every appeal made to Him in that character. But He was more than David's Son, He was also David's Lord. Into this condition, however, He did not formally enter as to dispensation, till He ascended and was glorified at the right hand of God (Matt. 22). But then He did; and the saints, having association with Him as thus ascended, sit with Him in His glory as David's Lord; and will therefore judge the world, and the tribes of Israel.

There is such a proceeding of God as the profanation of His own ordinance. This is a judicial visitation upon His unfaithful stewards. Thus the throne of David, which was God's ordinance of earthly government, was profaned. The Lord was wroth with His anointed, He made void the covenant of His servant, He profaned His crown by casting it to the ground (Psa. 89:38, 39). So, admitting that an apostolically appointed body is the Lord's ordinance for witnessing the truth and ministering the Spirit, yet it may in like manner be profaned. The way of doing this in the two cases must differ, because the purposes of the ordinances themselves differ. Thus God profaned the throne of David when He took earthly dominion from it, allowing it to pass over into Gentile hands; for that throne was to be the holder of earthly dominion. But He profanes the apostolically appointed body (ordained, as we admit, for the ministry of the Spirit,) by withdrawing this grace from it, and allowing the fullness that is in the blessed glorified Head, to pass through a new channel. Has He done so? or has He continued to dispense His truth and grace through the Romish and established clergy of these lands, were they an apostolically appointed body, to the denial or rejection of every other agency? The truth and life of God are (as I have granted and do thankfully acknowledge) in multitudes both of men and women in the established church; but this is a very different thing from that which I am considering. For I will repeat it that, where the rules of these “apostolically appointed” bodies are most rigidly enforced, there the energy of the Spirit is

not found, as he that runs may read. And are we to be moved, though a voice break from a pile of ruins, dead not living stones, crying “The temple of the Lord are these?”

(Concluded from page 71.)

Chapter 85

Joshua

Joshua is Christ as leading by the Spirit. So he is seen everywhere. Thus he seeks victory; he will attack and overcome. Even supposing Amalek sought to slay the weak ones, this does not alter its character, but only gave the occasion for the exercise of this energy. Compare Ex. 17

Chapter 86

Law and Man's Ruin

The acquirement of a position by conduct is a fallen state, and the principle of law. If a being is created in a given state, he ought to live up to that state, to keep it. Now man has lost it and is out of relationship with God, he is ruined on the ground of responsibility already. The law, which proposes life to him by his doing, is the means of convincing him of sin. When Christ is presented, man is free to receive Him, and life is in Christ for him; but his actual state is proved by his seeing no beauty in Him to desire Him.

Chapter 87

Leckey's Rationalism and the Truth

If the Son of God came down to earth, if God became a man, it is a fact. To make it of no importance is evidently false; because it offers an infinite object, affords the highest and most formative motive, and implies, especially when inquired into, the deepest moral elements in the relationship of God and man. Am I to worship Him or not? And worship is the highest condition of the soul. Is He to be all to me or not? Is the rejection of Him, and of perfect love in Him, indifferent?

Mr. L.'s delight is skepticism, his judgment of events superficial. Thus the excessive corruption, and money oppression, the shocking of conscience, before the Reformation, is all ignored. Of truth they never think. They will speak of darkness, of light in themselves, of man's competency to judge good and evil finally!—a strange thing to say in looking at what is in the world, and the variety of judgments; but of truth, of what God is, of what He is revealed to be, even of responsibility, never. For them there is no such thing as “the truth “; it is an evil “to make guilt out of errors of opinion.” I understand compassion on ignorance; but surely, if I have rejected the true God to worship Venus, or accept Mahomet as a prophet, there is some moral depravity. If Christ be God adequately manifested, the error which holds Him to be only man is a culpable one.

All revelation as a source of truth is for him impossible—all knowledge of God which it is important to maintain as truth. “Exclusive salvation” and “eternal punishment” are his two bugbears. If political economy prosper, and men go to the theater, all will be well! Wherever there is a dominant clergy, there will be bigotry. But we learn how the church, in leaving and losing its suffering place, and not holding the truth at its own cost instead of at that of others, has given a handle and a stumbling-block to the skeptic for his own destruction. The cross is its only place.

Chapter 88

Mr. Bartlett's Bampton Lectures on the Letter and the Spirit

The author writes without faith. It is not incompetence only. The late Dean Bargon was not always wise in what he wrote, as indeed he was not without strong prepossession and prejudice; but he was never without confidence in every tittle (not of the Received Text, but) of God's written word.

Not so Mr. R. E. Bartlett, who, in the spirit of this evil age, asks, “Do men care less for the spirit of the Bible, because the superstitious reverence for its letter has been overthrown?” He is a skeptic of the Farrar school or worse, if this can be. Just weigh the wicked folly of his hypothesis. “A man fall of the Holy Spirit will strive to pour forth to others the gift which God has committed to him to profit withal; but when he would do this in words, he finds that the more he is possessed with the Spirit! the more he is straightened, hampered, baffled by the limitations of speech!! He speaks with stammering lips! his utterances are broken, abrupt, inconsequent!! And still more in writing does the mechanical process tend to check and impede the spiritual force!”

It is evident that Mr. B. derives his ideas either from his natural mind, or from assuming that the irrepressible (and indeed demoniacal) enthusiasm of Pagan seers is no less true of God's inspired instruments. 1 Cor. 2 teaches doctrine irreconcilably opposed to this. Revelation and communication in words are both of the Holy Spirit; so that the failure perfect expression, which he is daring enough to take for granted, is excluded. He has evidently not the mind of Christ to appreciate God's word, and therefore feels and writes as an enemy. The plain facts of scripture manifestly refute this base and baseless theory. Its profoundest revelations are given in the calmest language. What can be found so deep as Christ's words in the Gospels, especially in the Fourth? Where is language so simple and pellucid to the spiritual ear?

Like many other doubters, Mr. B. looks for inspiration since the Bible. This is natural for one who denies its reality there. “The tendency of the exaltation of the Bible into the position of God's final utterance to His church has been to weaken the belief in the constant presence of the divine Spirit.” Has Mr. B. been more or less with Quakers, or the like dreamy enthusiasts, to imbibe thoughts so opposed to the truth? It is well known that the Christians who believe in the personal presence of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, are precisely those who adhere unflinchingly to the divine authority and perfection of God's written word, in the face of the popish idol of tradition, or the rationalistic idol of man's mind, both of them tools of Satan.

The last Bampton Lectures were Christless; these are a lower depth. Is Oxford to be ever and only the play-ground of Tractarians and Skeptics?

Chapter 89

The Lord Jesus in John 1:43, and John 2

The Lord may be traced in this scripture, as One Who ranges, if I may so express it, through different regions of divine glory, in the calm and perfect sense of this, that they all belong to Him, and are fully and properly His own.

In His intercourse with Nathanael, the Lord Jesus shows Himself to be the One Who touches the deep springs that are in man, conversing in power with the spirits of all flesh, re-making man also, re-creating him after His own mind, and stamping a new character upon him, as for eternity. He lets this Israelite know, that He had been with him under the fig-tree, ere Philip had called him; and that He was there with him, re-modeling his mind and character, giving him, as it were, a new condition of being, making him, according to the divine oracle in Psa. 32, “an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.”

It was the Spirit of God that alone could thus converse with Nathanael's soul, and form him anew, as was done under the fig-tree. And thus it is, that Jesus here rises on the conscience of that Israelite in the glory of God; and under the weight and sense of that glory Nathanael worships Him.

This is a very wondrous moment. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Jesus, the power which Jesus uses in divine sovereign grace. The Lord Jesus is before us here, as the Jehovah of the day of Gideon. Jehovah addressed Gideon according to His own counsel about him, or as such an one as His own Spirit was making him. “Thou mighty man of valor,” says the Lord to Gideon, though at that time he was but a poor man of Manasseh, threshing wheat in his father's threshing-floor at Ophrah. But, in the counsel of God, and by the energy of the Spirit, Gideon was the leader of the host of Israel against Midian; and the angel spoke in divine intelligence to him, or as the One who knew the purpose of God respecting him. So is it here. Jesus addressed Nathanael, as Nathanael was under the operation of the Holy Ghost, imparting to him the character of a guileless Israelite. This operation had been going on with Nathanael in the solitude of the fig-tree, an operation which Jesus was divinely acquainted with.

Jesus was thus visiting the soul as God alone can visit it. He was touching the very springs within, and forming man after a new model. And in this most blessed and wondrous way, we track Jesus through one peculiar region of divine glory, and see Him there, in the power of His own Spirit, doing divine work. And He is there, as at home, as One that had title to be there without wrong or robbery. For what, I may ask, of divine prerogative is not His? What region of divine power may He not survey and measure as His own? Be they deep or high, be they where the Spirit of God alone can move, be they where the finger of God alone can work, where the strength of God alone can be felt, or the wisdom of God alone can enter, Jesus will occupy them all, as all His own. And thus we find Him, as we pass on through this fine scripture.

There was a marriage in Cana, and Jesus is invited. He goes; and He is there in His despised rejected form, as among men. Man has objects worthier of his regard; and Jesus is nobody in the presence of the bridegroom, and the guests, and the governor of the feast. But, though the world

knew Him not, it was made by Him. And accordingly He touches the springs of nature here; as afore, in the person of Nathanael, He had touched the spirits of men. He re-creates, He re-forms, the material found in the kingdom around, as He had already done with the materials found in the kingdom within. He turns the water into wine, at this marriage feast in Cana.

This was what the finger of God, that once garnished the heavens, alone could do, the voice of God that once said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” But in this Jesus is seen in another region. He is God still, but God acting in another place or sphere of power, in the kingdom of nature, and not in the secret place of the spirits of all flesh. But it is the same unspeakably blessed God of glory that we track, whether here or there; and Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus the stranger on earth, Jesus the guest of the marriage at Cana, is He.

But do we, I ask, delight to see the Lord Jesus thus traversing regions where God alone could find and know His way Is this sight of His glories grateful to us? With all the grace which the thick veil of His humiliation casts over it, our spirits should have the same communion with the person of Jesus as with the presence of God. For it is God, though manifest in the flesh, we know in Him; and faith, therefore, worships. Man He was in deepest fullest verity; of flesh and blood partaker, but He was the Word made flesh. And there is no region of the divine glory that He does not tread in the calm assured power, and conscious right, which alone befit that only One to Whom they all belong.

But, again, He purifies the temple, His Father's house. Yet He does this as the God of the temple: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” This was building houses as God alone could build them. “Every house is builded of some man, but He that built all things is God.” To build by creation, or by resurrection, as here, is divine architecture; and Jesus is a divine builder. “He spake of the temple of His body.”

He had touched, as we saw, the springs of the spirit of man, and of nature, and now He touches the very sources or foundations of the power of death. And this is another region which belongs to God—part of His dominions. And Jesus, after this manner, as we still track Him through this scripture, is still God, God in the mighty strength of God down in the place of death, as before He had been God with the voice or finger of God abroad in the realm of nature, or with the Spirit of God in the place of the spirits of all flesh. “In John's Gospel,” as one has said, “Jesus is God come down from heaven.” Nature is not too wide a region for Him; the spirit of man that is in him is not too secret a region for Him; or death and the grave too deep or profound or mighty a region. He visits each and all of them in divine grace, divine power, or divine triumph, and leaves every where the same witness that God Himself had been there.

We have, however, another path of the glory of Christ still to follow in this scripture.

He had been doing miracles; and it is said, “Many believed on Him when they saw the miracles that He did.” But then it is added, “Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.”

Here is God again. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I the Lord search the heart.”

Jesus did not know man, or the springs and energies of corrupt nature, by reason of any fellowship with them, for He had no such fellowship. The prince of this world had nothing in Him. He was “that holy thing” — “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” But still, as this passage tells us, “He knew what was in man.” He knew it all, and that it was deceitful above all things. He searched the hearts and tried the reins of the children of men. He knew all men, not one more than another, but He tried the reins; He knew what was in man. He, Who by His prophet had long ago declared that, man was deceitful above all things, now (when He stood in the midst of men) would “not commit Himself unto them.”

This was divine acquaintance with man. This was fall, radical, perfect understanding of man, after the manner of the divine mind. Jesus was God in His knowledge of man. What Jehovah declared Himself to be by His prophet, Jesus is now declared to be by the evangelist. Jesus knew nothing of revolted man, or of the heart's corruption, by sympathy. But He knew it all as God, Who searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men, to give every man according to his ways, as He does here. For He denies man His confidence, as “deceitful above all things,” and thus, according to his ways, unworthy of that confidence.

Here again, then, the Lord Jesus takes the way of God, and ranges again through another region that belongs only to God.

We see Him thus, beloved. God He is, wherever God may be known or tracked: God, in the place of the spirits of all flesh; God, in the kingdom of nature; God, in victor-strength over death and the grave; God, as searching the hearts and reins of the children of men.

Jesus is there where God alone could be; and there, in all the settled ease and certainty of One Who knew those regions as His own. In grace unutterable He has known the homestead of the human family, and been an inhabitant of the village of Nazareth. The Son of man, He has lived and walked with the children of men, eaten of their bread and drunk of their cup, known their toils and their sorrows in all their reality, and at their hand suffered reproach and rejection and death. But He was equally at home where the Spirit of God alone could work, where the voice of God alone could be heard and command, where the strength of God alone could prevail, and where the light or knowledge of God alone could enter and search.

He ranges all the dominions of God, and is no trespasser. There is no robbery of a glory that is another's; it is His own. He is the Former of light, the Creator of the ends of the earth; the One Who touches the springs of nature, and they come forth in forms such as His fingers fashion, and His voice commands.

This is so; and we can track it all here in this scripture, without doubt or difficulty. But in the midst of all this, there is a thing betrayed, though incidentally, which, in hope of further profit, I will notice.

The mother, in a general sense, knew the glory and power of the Lord, but she knew not the season or the moral order of that glory; and this is, where-ever it appears, a great evil. She said to Him at the feast, “They have no wine,” desirous that He should display Himself. She was as one that said, “Show Thyself to the world” (chap. 7:4). But she greatly erred. His time for this had not come. He will indeed manifest His power in the souls of His elect now; He will, by His Spirit, visit Nathanael under the fig-tree; He will re-create a sinner, and give him a new character for eternity; and He will own such chosen ones, and know them, and address them in their new place, and

read out to them, as it were, the writing that is written of them in the Book of Life, as here in His earliest welcome of the man of Cana. He will do all this now; but He will not as yet shine in a glory that the world can appreciate. “My time,” says He, “is not yet come.” The mother, therefore, did greatly err: a common error, and never more common than in this day in which we live. “Show us a sign from heaven” was the craving of hearts that knew not the Christ, the Son of God, because the god of this world had blinded their eyes. But Jesus gave them another kind of sign altogether, “the sign of Jonas the prophet.” He must be known in humiliation in such a world as this, if known aright. The mother took the place and part of the world in this suggestion, “They have no wine;” and she is rebuked— “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” Her worldly-mindedness is rebuked. Jesus could have no sympathy with it.

Not only, however, is she rebuked; she fails also to see the glory that the Lord will display; and this has great meaning in it for us.

He makes the water wine. He supplies the table as the divine Lord, or Creator, of the feast. But the governor of the feast knew nothing of this, the bridegroom knew nothing of it, the guests knew nothing of it, the mother was not in the secret or the vision of it. It was only the servants who had this secret in the midst of them, and the disciples who had this manifestation of glory made to them.

All this has great meaning in it for us. The mother lost, in spirit, what she had (in the mind of the world) sought after. And so with us. As far as we are in spirit one with the world, so far must we be left without discoveries of the glory of the Son of God, or communion with Him. For He is not of the world; His time for manifestation in it is not yet come. It must be judged and re-fashioned, ere that can be. And according to the moral of such a truth as that, the mother, on this occasion, is rebuked and is left without the manifestation of that glory in which the Son could shine and did shine. Those, and those only, who were in the due place, the servants and the disciples, are let into the secret, and get the vision; for they filled morally the very opposite place of the mother. She was of the world, but they are nobody in the scene. The governor of the feast, had his dignity, the bridegroom his joy, the guests their good cheer, and the mother a mother's vanity and expectations; but the servants and the disciples are nothing, and seek for nothing beyond what service or discipleship called them to, and they learn the secret of His power, and behold the manifestation of His glory.

What a lesson for us in the midst of these discoveries of Him Who was “God manifest in the flesh”! We must awake, we that are sleeping with the world, if we would get more of the light of the Lord.

Chapter 90

Man's Responsibility and God's Promises: Part 1

There are two great points in this chapter: First, the effect of the law, when anyone is under it;

Secondly, the contrast between law and promise, and whether it he by law, or by promise, that the blessing of the inheritance is ours.

In the early part of the chapter (I do not speak now of the first two or three verses), we are told that the effect of being under the law is to be “under the curse “; in the latter part, we find the blessings of the inheritance ours, not by law, but by promise: “If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Thus are the counsels of God brought out, and this in a manner that applies itself to the constant tendency of the human heart and its actings, which ever go to exalt man, and to debase God.

It is singular the way in which the human heart is continually reasoning within itself, as if there was no distinct revelation from God of His mind-searching and inquiring in order that it may conclude something about itself and God. Now it is quite true that the power of grace must work, in order that this revelation should be understood. But it is not merely in the unconverted man that there is this reasoning. Alas! he often reasons not at all, but goes on in his own way, careless, reckless, and unconcerned. In the heart of the saints there is constant reasoning with regard to their standing before God. And, in all such cases, it is quite plain that faith is not in exercise. Whenever I begin to reason on the state of my own soul, faith is not in exercise. I do not say that the person is not a believer, but I say, faith is not in exercise. This is quite evident. Faith receives the testimony of God, and does not reason about it. There the difficulty lies. It is not that revelation is not plain, but that the heart of man is not subdued.

It is not a proof that faith is in exercise when I do not judge myself, because, when I judge myself, I judge myself before the Lord, in order to have removed whatever may be found within me that is wrong in His sight. Grace enables me to do this. But whenever there is any reasoning from myself as to my condition, faith is not in exercise. It is true this reasoning may follow upon belief in testimony (—be, in that sense, a consequence of faith), but it is not faith. That is, I may believe there is a judgment to come, and that Christ can be my only Savior (seeing there is not salvation in another, for “there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved”), and I may set about reasoning as to what will be my portion, whether I can say that Christ is my Savior; but this is not, in itself, any right exercise of faith.

We shall find the testimony of the word of God to be most simple. Yet, wherever the natural conscience is awakened, there is a certain sense of responsibility to God (indeed that is, in a sense, the awakening of it)—the knowledge that God takes notice of all that is going on, of what we do, and the like, and that there is a judgment to come. Therefore the moment a man's conscience is so awakened (the grace of God not being known), he begins to inquire whether his good act is such as God can approve and accept; and thence he draws some inference as to his own future happiness or misery. This is the natural state of man—of every man that thinks about

the matter. But it is alas! the real condition too of multitudes of believers in Christ, and of those even who have once known redemption largely. There is a constant tendency in the heart to turn again to self—to a condition in which man stands responsible to God. It is always the case when the soul has got out of the power of the testimony of the Spirit of God as to the completeness of redemption; as also when we have not come to a distinct knowledge of the hopelessness of our condition before God as men. I say “to a distinct knowledge;” that is, when the soul has not estimated truthfully the hopelessness of its case, that in the flesh good does not dwell, and become fully satisfied that everything—all the practical righteousness, holiness, or graciousness of the saint—is consequent upon the introduction of that new thing created in us by the power of God because of the risen Jesus.

We get in these Galatians an example of this, where the soul, after having had the knowledge of grace in Jesus Christ “evidently set forth crucified among them,” went back. They had “begun in the Spirit,” and they now thought “in the flesh” to add to what Christ had done. That is, that they could, by that which is in man, and of man—the old man too—add to that which is of the new man, Christ. And that, I repeat, beloved, is the constant tendency of the heart. Wherever there is not the distinct knowledge of the hopelessness of man's condition before God, we go back to get from Man something which may be added to what God has given us in the Lord Jesus Christ. John says, “This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” Now if we do not know that the flesh cannot in any way come in and take a share or part in it, we are constantly adding and connecting something of the flesh.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 91

Man's Responsibility and God's Promises: Part 2

God began by giving “promise.” And here there was nothing at all of man. But, because (as we shall see more especially in the latter part of the chapter, where the apostle speaks about promise from God—promise coming from Him when there was nothing in man to call it out, except indeed the ruin and need of man), when He had given the promise, before He had completed that which He had promised—redemption, before the revelation of Christ, He knew the constant tendency of the human heart to seek to satisfy its own feeling of responsibility, God gave the full extent of His demand upon it, with the consequence of failure. Because, I say, He knew what was in the heart of man, its tendency from the first (natural tendency, that is, until redemption and grace are fully known) to judge about itself by itself as to its future state; and also the pride of man, which supposes something in man which can be brought to God, or something from man which can be done for God, before He did anything for the accomplishment of His promise, He brought in the law, thus trying man in responsibility to the utmost.

It is quite right, most assuredly, to be what God has required in His revealed will. God has in the law demanded a certain amount of good in man, and I have the plain revelation of God about it. Therefore I cannot act as if there were no revelation. It is one of the sins of the heart of man, that of “intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,” thinking he can approach God by some means of his own devising. God requires something that is not merely the work of man's hands, something real in the soul, something which has to do with man's relationship to Himself, and to his fellow-creatures. There is this in the law—the direct requirement of God from man, of what man ought to be towards God and before Him. This is one way to take up the law. And, further, there is the prohibition of what sin had brought in.

There are these two things. The first is what God requires positively of man, expressed in the summary given by our Lord— “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” There is also the other part, the prohibition of what man was indulging in. The law presented the requirements of God, that is, supposing man was right practically before God; and took cognizance of what man was not, and prohibited it. And that is all the law did; except, indeed, to pronounce the curse, if there was failure in the things required.

Now as soon as this is tried—the moment we get here, and see the law in this light—we find man at once brought in completely hopeless and helpless; and for this very reason, that he has done the things God forbids. He is “ungodly,” but not only so; he is, moreover, “without strength.” This is his condition naturally; and the moment there is real desire, and the endeavor, to serve God according to the law, it is found out. Supposing he desires (which I assume and grace produces it) to serve God, and not to do anything forbidden in the law, he discovers the very principle of his nature to be all wrong. There is “a law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin, which is in his members,” which has selfishness for its basis, and corruption for its object. It is in himself. Hence the reason that we so often find persons

crying out, “O wretched man that I am!” Moreover, when he comes to see what is in himself, it is that which brings him down into despair. It is not his past sins—he could easily suppose God might forgive them, nay, perhaps, that they were actually forgiven, when he was first converted. The trial is not there. But when he feels the principle of those sins to be in himself—the principle which produced them there still and working in him, now that he lives and “delights in the law of God after the inner man” —it is this which casts him down. And cast down he remains until he apprehends the ministry of grace.

Now, beloved friends, you see God has given law for the prohibition of evil. And, taking it in that point of view, He gave it to man already in sin. It came in after two things, evil, and the promise. It was a thing “added because of transgressions, until the Seed should come to Whom the promise was made” (ver. 19), neither the original condition of man, nor the purpose of God about man. It “came in,” it is said (though its elements, no doubt, are everlasting and eternal truth), “by the bye,” added because of transgressions. “The law παρεισ■λθε, that the offense might abound” (Rom. 5:20). Hence we are taught, that its object was to make plain and evident—to discover that perverseness of the will of man, which would never otherwise have been discovered—the inclination, where there is the knowledge of good, and the desire after good, to do evil; and, therefore, the hopelessness of man's case before God. Man is concluded under sin (ver. 22). Such is the effect of the law.

It was quite clear that man delighted in sin. Natural conscience sufficed to spew there was sin and guilt. But then the law came in and was added to these, “that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God” (Rom. 3:19).

What is said here? “As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse” (ver. 10). Mark the force of that expression. It is not, as many as are living in sin, neither yet merely as many as have broken the law (though this is the reason of it); but “as many as (■σοι) are of the works of the law.” How universal the statement! It is quite true that man is under “the curse of the law,” because he has been the breaker of the law, but it is all who are of the works of the law who are under that curse. The law was not given to prohibit lust, until man was a willful creature—a being in whom lust was found—until after sin had entered. I am not now speaking of the law respecting Adam's not eating the fruit, but of the law given by Moses (ver. 19). Coming in at that time, it pronounced the curse upon every one “not continuing in all things that were written in the book of the law, to do them.” It took this ground.

And even the very notice, in the scripture before us, is remarkable. The apostle says, “for it is written” (ver. 10), that is, he quotes Deuteronomy, where we find (chap. xxvii.) that six tribes were to stand upon Mount Gerizim, to bless the people; and six upon Mount Ebal, to curse. But where the details are entered into, there are no tribes mentioned for blessing. The blessing is not heard at all!—it is only the curse.

(Continued from page 56.)

Chapter 92

Man's Responsibility and God's Promises: Part 3

Again, “the law entered that the offence might abound” (not that the sin might abound: God could not do anything that “sin” might abound), that is, that the sin already in man’s nature might become positively and definitely “transgression.” The law did not produce sin, but only manifested it. Let us look at what the apostle says in Romans 7. “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained unto life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good.” Again, we read in another place (I merely quote it now as regards its application to this part of the subject), “The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law” (1 Cor. 15:56). Directly the law bent down on the conscience, it proved man to be altogether wrong. Every thought that man had was detected, and, the will refusing to submit, its acts became transgression, so that sin by the commandment became “exceeding sinful.” It produced moreover a great deal more lust in the heart than there was before.

We all know this to be the case. There is a familiar illustration of it constantly seen in our own houses. Request your children not to do a certain thing: let it be only not to look into a box (no matter what). Do you not find that they all long to look into it? So it is with grown-up persons; they will perversely wish for the forbidden thing, and, what is more, though they may be ashamed of it—ashamed of the expression of it before men, the inclination is so great, that, if they could but do it and not be seen, they would not be satisfied until they had. It is just so with the law.

And now, beloved friends, if that is what the law is, if all who are “of the works of the law are under the curse,” is that the law for me, to have any righteousness through, in the sight of God? Never; because the law acts on a nature which is already evil; and therefore it can do nothing but lead to the righteous judgment of God against all that is brought out, in and from that nature.

What more could God do? (it is not the subject of this chapter, but I would just advert to it)—what more than give right directions, a revelation—of what He required from man? There is another thing that He has done. He sent light into the world. This is something added, as it were, to the requirements of the law. The law cursed; but here (in Christ) was Life showing light to all around, and this man hated, because it proved his deeds to be evil. It was the adaptation of light to every possible state in which man's nature could move. I am not speaking of communicating life; but take man in any condition, and he is without excuse.

Well, beloved, this is the effect of the law as revealed from God. It took up fallen man with the knowledge of good and evil, and did not touch the power he had to meet its requirements, and therefore, necessarily, it brought the curse. The apostle reasons, “If there had been a law given

which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin" (ver. 21, 22). Mark that word "all:" it leaves out none. It might be said, "If you go and take a man without the ordinances of God, and put him under the law, the effect is known: but there are helps and ordinances—put a man with them under the law, and he can get life." This was precisely Israel's case. It pleased God (God in Israel) to test whether man could get the promises, if under the law with ordinances. It has been proved to the contrary. God says (Ex. 19), "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself." It was not until He had ransomed them out of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness as His "people," that He gave them the law—not until He had brought them unto Himself. Then He says by Moses the mediator, "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed," &c. (ver. 5). And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord, "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do." The law was given on this ground. Then commenced the trial. And what was the consequence? Failure.

"The scripture hath concluded all under sin." And this is what the gospel more fully brought out. The gospel supposes it. Man, no matter what you call him, a heathen, a Jew, or a Christian, with every ordinance you please, is man, and the law deals to man the "curse." Man should be what man is not. And therefore that is what the law of God must do, and did. If God gives a law, can He give the law to suit sinners, or Himself? Is God to come down to give its requirements such as would suit the sinner as a sinner? and, if so, what sinner? where would you draw the line? to a heathen, who is corrupt in all his thoughts? to a Jew, who looks merely to outward things? where can I find a man to whom I might adapt the law, if it is not to be what God requires? If God gives a law to sinners, He must give the full demand of His holiness. This is what the conscience of man recognizes as fitting. There, can be no intercourse between God and the sinner on the ground of what God requires, without His either sanctioning or condemning sin. Sanction it He cannot; therefore, and necessarily, all He has to do is to condemn. Law can never go beyond that. No matter what man is called, God deals with man as he really is. And now, what does the apostle put here in the stead of law? "Promise." There he rests the hope of the soul. "Promise" was long before the law. All hangs upon the faithfulness of God. This is the reasoning. A mediator supposes two parties, God and man, and therefore failure, as it depends on the stability of both. Not so promise, as it depends on the stability of God only: "God is one."

If to-day, I make you an unconditional promise, a simple promise, I have no right to say on the morrow, "Oh! you did not do so and so, and therefore the promise is nullified." Certainly not. No! you would reply, you promised me the thing unconditionally, not if I behaved well or ill; and therefore it is mine.

These "promises" were made after sin came in, but before the giving of the law. Sin came in before ever "promise" was heard of. When Adam had failed in the garden, before anything was said to Adam of the foulest sin in his mind, after he had said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (he had not only committed sin in disobeying God's command, but he had dared to reproach God)—before anything was said of that as soon as the evil was traced up to its source, God, in pronouncing sentence on the serpent as the author of it, gave "promise." But He did not give "promise" to Adam in sin—to man in that condition (now the law was given to man in that condition), but in the Second man Before there was the slightest dealing on the ground of responsibility, "promise" was made in Christ, as the last Adam, the "Seed

of the woman.” Not a word of it was spoken to Adam personally, yet it was that on which his soul might rest, on which faith could lay hold.

Well, before the Second man came, before He was revealed, the law was given to show the effect and consequence of man's being under responsibility. “The law was added (came in by the bye) because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to Whom the promise was made.”

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman (the Seed come), made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”

But there was another step, then, which was this:the promises made to Abraham and his seed (iii. 17) were confirmed of God to Christ. When Isaac had been offered up (in figure) and raised (in figure), God spake and said, “By myself have I sworn, 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 thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 22). Now Isaac was not the true “Seed.” Christ, the true “Seed,” was typified by Isaac, in whose offering the promise was confirmed. “He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (ver. 16). The promises were settled on Isaac, after (in figure) he had died and risen again from the dead; and that is what the grace of God has done for us in Christ. Christ came here and lived, accomplishing, in the face of Satan, all that the spiritual man could offer to God in his life. But “except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Though Christ Himself, as man, might have had the promises, yet He could not have taken anything with us except through death in resurrection. He could not have had connection with man in the old Adam. Well, He dies, and (having accomplished the work of redemption, done everything, set aside the consequences of responsibility for man, as risen from the dead in the power of a new and endless life— “the Seed” to whom the promises were made) He takes up these promises.

As men, we were under responsibility, and therefore, under the curse, for we had sinned. Yes, though through grace, able to say that we are “heirs according to the promise,” we had sinned. There was no difference in this respect between ourselves and any poor Jew or Gentile, we were all “by nature children of wrath, even as others,” “fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (Eph. 2:3). The state of soul was the same. Perverseness of will was there—the determination to do our own will, and the pleasure of doing it, instead of the will of God.

Christ took all this upon Himself He charged Himself with responsibility, instead of putting man under it. He underwent, to the full, the last effect of sin, as the result of the wrath of God, and of the power of Satan, as well as of the weakness of man. He bore the curse. He went down into the grave. But He was still the “holy One,” and (though He might imputatively take sin) it was not possible that He could be holden of the cords of death. Therefore He rose again—Head of a new family of men, of a new world, of a new creation—Heir, according to the purposes of God, of all the promises, and Heir forever.

He has accomplished everything—all that was needed for the remission of our sins, and besides, He has broken the power of Satan under which man lay, in the very seat of that power. Through death He has “destroyed him that had the power of death” (Heb. 2). Most blessed truth! Christ has put Himself into the condition of man in death, the last stronghold in which Satan held man captive,

by the judgment and under the sentence of God Himself. He rose out of it, and became the source of life, and heir for us of all the promises. Grace has found its way into death, and “out of the eater” has brought forth sweetness.

(Continued from page 74.)

Chapter 93

Man's Responsibility and God's Promises: Part 4

If we look at death, the Prince of life has tasted death; if, at the power of Satan, Christ has broken and destroyed his power; if, at the wrath of God, He has borne it all—drunk the cup to the very dregs. “All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me.” “Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and Thou hast afflicted me with all Thy waves.”

But, further, He is the righteous inheritor of all the promises; as it is said, “All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen,” and we, through grace, can add, “to the glory of God by us.”

How then did we come in.? As heirs together with Him, in Spirit united to Him—one with Him. Our standing before God is in Christ—the new Man, as having no more part in the flesh, though we have as yet to struggle against it. Death is abolished. Life and incorruptibility are brought to light by the gospel; and that, because the responsibility question has been settled in the death of Christ.

But it is “by faith.” How gracious this! how true of God! how blessed for us! By faith we receive all the promises in Christ. By faith we find everything done. It is only to believe. Faith produces all manner of fruit in us; there is wondrous power in it, but still it is only to believe: that is all. Just as though you had been deeply in debt, and some kind friend had paid the amount, and, when that was done, had sent you word. The person comes and tells you that your debts are paid, and you believe it. Now your believing produces joy and gladness, doubtless, in your heart; but, of course, it does not in any measure go to liquidate the debt. So as to salvation, the debt has been paid, Christ has finished the work, and the believing soul enters into all the blessed results (ver. 22). Faith is exercised upon that which has been already accomplished. “It is of faith, that it might be by grace, that the promise might be sure to all the seed.” Nothing redounds to the glory of the creature. It is a person simply depending upon the truth of God.

When the soul is made hopeless in itself (and this must always be the case when the conscience is really honest under the sense of responsibility), it turns to see what God is. The more the truth of God's requirements is known, the more wretched the soul becomes. The end of all is seen in that exclamation of the apostle, “O wretched man,” &c. I am a man, and therefore a wretched being, one having the curse resting upon me.

God, in the gospel, sees man wicked, miserable, rebellious, lost; but He sees him according to His infinite compassions. The Lord Jesus has begun altogether a new thing, not demanding what man is required to be before God, but accomplishing what God is towards man in grace. We find in Christ, it is true, and to perfection, what man is required to be before God; but more than that, what God is towards man. Grace came by Jesus Christ. So that the moment any person, let it be a convicted sinner, stood before Christ as what he was, he found Christ to be grace. If he came as what he was not, Christ laid him bare; but, if he came as what he was, then no matter what he was, a poor helpless sinner, a wretched adulteress, or the robber upon the cross (that was not the question—the question was, what was Christ? Who came not to judge, but to save), all was grace.

Having found Christ, we have found One Who has all the promises of God. And, since He took those promises as a consequence of what He had done in patting away sin, there can be no further question about sin before God. Our sins are necessarily left outside, because Christ Himself has borne them all; as it is said, “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” He stood in our place, and took upon Himself our iniquity, and bore the judgment due to us. He went down into the grave, but rose again from the dead in the power of a new and endless life, and ascended up on high, even unto the Father's presence, as our representative. There He stands, and we stand there in Him; as He is before God, so are we, holy, unblameable, and unreproveable in His sight, partakers of His life, joint-heirs with Him of all the promises.

This, beloved friends, is our position before God; this our standing in Christ. There is an entirely new headship in the Last Adam. We are presented in a new character to God, such as man never had before—man without sin in the presence of God, the very pattern of God's mind and delight. We find difficulty, it may be, in apprehending it, because of the weakness of the flesh. The moment I look at myself, I have another man full of failure. But I stand there as having had sin forever put away. The knowledge of this gives peace; and we worship. Make sin what you please, let it take what form it may, you cannot mingle the state of man under law with the condition of the new, the heavenly, Man in the presence of God.

The Lord grant us to know what we are in His love. J. N. D.

(Concluded from page 92.)

Chapter 94

Man's Soul Not Mortal

My dear Brother,

I cannot but regret that this thought has laid hold of your mind. It goes far more deeply into the center of Christianity than mere human notions of measured punishment. The immortality of the soul is at the root, and, with it, responsibility, repentance, and atonement; all of which are wholly gone in this human scheme. The character and evil of sin and divine judgment, are equally involved; and, whenever it acquires power over the mind, the whole state of the soul is changed, which loses reality and integrity before God. It is not surely a question of comparing obscure passages in the revelation, but of our nature, and the whole nature of our relations with God. If the soul be immortal, its state in judgment continues; if not, we are only a superior kind of animal, more intelligent perhaps, but morally the same, and our responsibility as such gone.

If temporary punishment is adequate, Christ had to bear no more. I say this, not to prove anything, though for one who possesses the truth in his conscience, it proves a good deal; but to show you what is involved. If a man was to prove to me that a doctrine involved unholiness, I should know, without more, it was false: as was said to me yesterday, “I am free to sin.” This must be false interpretation.

But I will first show you how false your presentation of things is. As to “all live unto Him” (Luke 20:38), there is no implication. The doctrine to which it is an answer denies the immortality of the soul, and holds consequently that, as the soul is not immortal, death is ceasing to exist, as in the case of the beasts that perish. Now the passage quoted is a direct formal proof that death is no such thing; but that when dead, they are alive to God as before. It formally and explicitly denies their doctrine. But you say, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment,” implies everlasting punishment. It implies nothing about it, but states it; just as it states that the others go away into everlasting life. Neither implies anything. They state the fact. If it had been said, “everlasting fire,” it might have been alleged, truly or falsely, that, though the fire was eternal, they were not [in it]. But they go into “everlasting punishment"; which is not so if they do not exist. There is no punishment, if no one is there.

Again, you say, The smoke of their torment modifies. How does it modify it, if it is their torment, not the smoke of the fire? It is the smoke of what they are undergoing. If death is not ceasing to exist (and scripture is carefully certain as to this: killing the body is not killing the soul), if the duration of punishment is the same as of life, as of God, as of redemption, the case is clear statement, not implying. The whole of the ground taken by those who hold these doctrines is, that we have existence as animals; all their arguments turn on this. If this be so, responsibility is gone. A dog and an elephant are not responsible; they have not to repent; Christ has not to bear their sins. Give them eternal life! No gospel is needed for them. Christ has nothing to bear for them. They need no atonement. They do not hate God, as man in the flesh does. If as, on your theory, men endure temporary punishment (a cruel system, unworthy of God), then Christ had only that to bear formally. Sin has only that measure of evil. All the glory of His work, and my sense of sin, sink

down in proportion. Nor did I ever find one person who held these views, who had not (at least, mentally) lost the atonement; nor can it be otherwise. For one who has only an animal soul cannot be responsible; be he saved or not, no atonement is needed. Christianity is gone in this system. If I have an immortal or undying soul, and hate God, when judicially cast out (having such), my torment is infinite, as far as a creature can use the word. This I understand felt in a measure (only not with finality of divine present); but if it is only inflicted punishment for a term without any object but a purely gratuitous one, it seems an easy scheme to man; but it is God taking pleasure in useless punishment, when they are going to end their existence after all.

What “eternal” means is clear from scripture. “The things that are seen are temporal, the things that are unseen eternal.” It means what is the opposite to “for a time.” Chapter 66 of Isaiah, as all these Old Testament passages, refers to the government of earth and what happens there. But it shows thus much, that the fire and the worm do not destroy; the carcasses subsist without being consumed. Hence the Lord does not cite it, but uses it as the expression of enduring torment. He does not speak of “carcasses” nor “abhorring to flesh.” It is not true to say that it abstains from statements of duration of pain. Eternal punishment (κ■λασις, torment) is expressly the contrary.. So is “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.”

Your explanation of a continual stroke seems to me as unfounded as possible, The stroke was not removed: he was always [under] it. It was not instantaneous, but continual.

It is not only the beast and the false prophet, and those who worship the beast's image, who are cast into the lake of fire, but “whosoever was not found written in the book of life.” And it is a simply gratuitous assumption that there is a third death after it, not in the gospel, not given as a hope, or as presumptive deliverance, but invented to satisfy the thoughts of men as possible, you say, but which denies the statement of scripture as to many, being spoken of where needed. They are in danger of eternal damnation (■νοχοι), which make the threatenings of scripture a bugaboo to frighten people with what is not true. But when it says, “Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,” it is groundless fear! It is not “their worm” very soon at all; for though the worm is not dead, they have ceased to exist; so the terror for them is unfounded. And, remark, that at the judgment of the great white throne the intermediate state is closed, death and hades. The dead have been raised and these (the wicked) cast into the lake of fire, where we have seen others tormented forever and ever, and of which it is said in general, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

Responsibility, repentance, and atonement disappear. Instead of the offspring of God, sons of Adam (“son of God"), into whose nostrils God breathed the breath of life, turned to hate God and, so persevering in it, excluded from His presence, cast into outer darkness, privation of God now judicially, for Whom by His inbreathed spirit of life he was made, you give me, with no need of atonement for me, a set of animals punished for a time, with no possible purpose or possible fruit; and on the ground that you say, “may it not be possible?” I say, impossible, if God's word be not a bugbear, and Christianity be true, and my responsibility, repentance, and atonement.

I reply to your letter: I do not argue out the question, because you have what has been written; to which you may add F. Grant's book, “Life and Immortality,” yet still more the word of God, but the word of God for conscience. I have always found it to be a question of the sense of sin, and so the need of atonement—what my sin has deserved from God. Your own letter proves this, for

temporary punishment is adequate to it. I thank you for writing to me about it, and reply at once. My being in America of course delays my answer. 1 earnestly pray God your soul and conscience may get clear. Get that sense of sin which makes it impossible, to accept these reasonings. It is a common thing now, but issues (though saints are deceived by it too) in infidelity. I have given my letter to one brother.

Affectionately yours in the Lord,

J. N. D.

Chapter 95

Materialism

The connection between matter and mind now is notorious. To say “it must be” is merely the irrationalism of saying that my present state is the necessary and universal form of being. You may, with Mr. Owen and Prof. Huxley, have examined every cerebrum and cerebellum from a Lemur to a Pithecus, and you have not touched the question; you have seen it on the side of matter, and of matter only; and you are incapable, in ideas or reasoning, of going farther, because that is the form of your existence now, and even so only one and tine lowest side of it.

Chapter 96

Matthew 21, 22, 23: Part 1

That the Lord came to deliver the house of Israel out of the hand of their enemies, and then to reign over them, appears from the promises, generally, of God to His people by the prophets. But most especially and distinctly is this the subject of that noble strain of prophecy which commences with the 7th chapter, and closes with the 7th verse of the 9th chapter of Isaiah. At the time when that prophecy was delivered, Syria and Ephraim were confederated against Judah, and Isaiah was commissioned to sustain the courage of the house of David by an assurance that the confederacy should not prevail. In token of this, the prophet's two children, as well as the promised Immanuel, are set up as signs; and the discomfiture of the then present confederacy was the pledge of the discomfiture of every confederacy that might be formed against the house and throne of David, so as to secure to it in the end (though for a long, dreary, and dark season it might lie in ruins and dishonor) rest and glory, wheel “the Child” should be “born” and the “Son given,” Whose right it was on that throne to sit, and to “order and establish it forever.” The parable of “the wicked husbandmen,” in like manner, distinctly instructs us in the same doctrine—that the mission of the Son of God, was, as to one of its purposes, to keep the Jewish nation still in the possession of the vineyard, under the care and government of Him Whose inheritance it was, and for disallowing Whose title to which, and for this only, it has been taken from them.

Thus the day of the redemption and kingdom of Israel has been delayed because of their unbelief, because they could not discern the glory of the kingdom in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Before, however, the Lord Jesus would formally pronounce upon their present loss of the kingdom, it appears to me that He would call forth, from the nation of Israel, a formal rejection of Him in the fully manifested character of their King, so that they might be left without excuse. Hence arises the scene of His last solemn entry into their city, which was transacted, as we shall see, in the style and with the actions of the true Son of David, the rightful King of Israel. In connection with this solemn entry will be found all the scenes recorded in Matt. 21-23, which I distribute and interpret as follows:

The Royal Visitation.-21:1-14.

We learn that, in the purest days of the Jewish government, the principal men in Israel used no animals but asses (Judg. 5:10; 10:4; 12:14), horses not being introduced till the corrupt times of Solomon. The Lord, then, when assuming the style of “King of Israel,” of course took every feature, however minute, which belonged to the only pure and true form of such a character, and therefore orders His disciples to bring an ass's colt to Him. And besides, this was Messiah's exhibiting Himself as King, just as the prophet had before presented Him (Zech. 9:9), and His being “meek and lowly” was as kingly a feature as any other. For Moses had provided, that the king, who should hereafter be appointed to rule over Israel, should not surround himself with such circumstances and pomp as might lift up his head in pride above his brethren, and Christ, the King, would doubtless conform Himself to the model thus furnished by Moses (Deut. 17:14).

The actions of spreading their garments and strewing branches of trees in the way were expressive of the honor in which the multitude held Him, and the joy with which they saluted Him. His garments were now, as it were, smelling of myrrh, aloes, and cassia. The people hailed Him as King (Luke 19:38), called Him “the Son of David,” and thus recognized His title to the throne of David (Mark 11:10). The palmy multitude, as it were, was keeping the feast of Tabernacles. They took their triumphant acclamations from Psa. 118 that place of the scriptures which represents the nation of Israel, bringing into His glory the Head Stone, Which had been previously rejected by the builders; so were they doing now, welcoming Messiah to His kingdom, and, as said by the prophet, “the shout of a King was among them” (Num. 23:21). All this, it may be, they neither understood nor intended, but they were divinely moved to take the part which they did, in order that the whole scene might be the presentation of their King, in full form, to the city and nation of the Jews, in the person of Him who was just coming among them. On the Lord's entry into the city, Jerusalem was moved with wonder at the sight, saying, “Who is this?” But when they learned that this was “Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee,” we may presume that many began to despise the Galilean King. The Lord at once goes up to the temple, and there performs a solemn action, strikingly characteristic of “King of Israel,” —He purifies the house of God.

Such had been one of the functions, and was properly alone within the due exercise of the royal authority. We find the best kings of Judah reforming the religion of the people in their days—witness Hezekiah and Josiah; and here, in virtue of the same kingly authority, the Lord takes upon Him the same action.

There, too, in the temple, He heals the lame and the blind, thus giving further evidence that He was exhibiting, in His person, the virtues which the prophet had pointed at as belonging to Messiah, and to Messiah in His kingdom (Isa. 35:5, 6). Nothing then was now wanting—the decisive moment was come, and inquisition was now in making, “would they reverence the Son?”

Israel's Rejection of Their King. 21:15-22.

The enmity of the principal men, who were the organs and representatives of the people, now declared itself; and they formally disallow their rightful Lord and King. They were “sore displeased” in the Son of David, and cast out the Heir of the vineyard. Thus they counted themselves unworthy of the kingdom. The Lord rebuked them by a passage taken from the 8th Psalm, which on this occasion was most seasonable, being calculated both to rebuke the Jews, by giving them, for the present, the place of the enemy and the avenger, and also to present Him, the rejected Messiah, in His full and proper glories before them (see Heb. 2:8).

Having then shut them up under the rebuke and condemnation of this Psalm, the Lord “left them and went out of the city;” thus formally disclaiming it, at least for the present, as the place of His throne.

On His return, the next morning, by a very significant symbolical action He warns His disciples of the judgment which was now, in consequence of His own having thus refused to receive Him, soon to be executed on the Jewish church and nation. He performs the act of the Lord of the vineyard, described before by Isaiah, which clearly was designed to represent the judgment of the apostate Jewish system under the hand of Messiah. He then further instructs His disciples in the important truth, that the Jewish system was about to be superseded by a dispensation among

them as His disciples, the characteristic energy or virtue of which, was to be faith; to which, and not to the temple, was to be committed the exercise of God's power upon earth. The mountain of the Lord's house was now to be cast into a troubled sea; the kingdom to be taken from the Jews of that day and given to a nation, the holy nation of that elect remnant of the last days, who shall have faith in Him, the rejected Stone (1 Peter 2:6-9), bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Chapter 97

Matthew 21, 22, 23: Part 2

The insolence of the chief priests and elders increasing, and their enmity being set more on work, they come forward and make their first challenge of the Lord. They call upon Him to produce His credentials— “By what authority, say they, doest thou these things?” In reply, He puts it upon them to decide as to the authority of John's baptism, whether it was “from heaven or of men.” This He did, not so much with the design of hazarding their safety with the multitude, as their evil hearts suggested, but of leading them, in God's own appointed way, to the answer of their own inquiry; for as they ought to have felt no hesitation in deciding John's baptism to have been “from heaven,” this would have at once shown by what authority He was acting; for John's ministry was God's testimony to Him, the Christ. And then, in order to show them that they should have no hesitation in deciding that John's baptism was from heaven, He constructs the parable of “the two sons,” the purpose of which most plainly was to show them on their own principles of righteousness, which John practiced and taught, that it had been “from heaven,” and thus to convict them of sin in rejecting this counsel of God against themselves.

In the parable of “The wicked husbandmen,” the Lord after this presents to them a view of their transgressions as a nation, the full measure of which they were now awfully filling up, and, according to a similar parable in their prophet, He leads these “inhabitants of Jerusalem,” these “men of Judah,” to judge themselves in the controversy between Him, the householder, and His vineyard. He then confirms the fact of their being ripe for judgment, by citing two passages, one from Psa. 118 and another from Isa. 8, which together showed them that they had rejected Him, the sure foundation Stone, and must therefore suffer the judgment written. The enmity of the Pharisees was now worked up to a still greater heat, and they were only hindered by their fears of the multitude from seizing on Him, and killing this blessed Heir of the vineyard.

The Lord then delivers the parable of “The marriage of the King's Son,” which, in drawing out the character and history of the kingdom of heaven, pointedly and advisably (as did the former parable) exhibits the refusal of the Jews, though bidden again and again, to enter into that kingdom, and also their awful destruction which followed thereon.

The Pharisees now took solemn counsel, and laid their plans for ensnaring the Lord. Finding as they had just done, that because of the multitude they had no hope of getting Him into their power simply as a Jew, they seek occasion against Him as a subject of Caesar in order to deliver Him over into the power and authority of the Romans. Thus minded, they formally enter upon their second challenge of the blessed Jesus. They send a few of their disciples with certain Herodians, a political sect of Jews that were slaves to the Roman interests, who insidiously asked Him, “Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not?” The Lord, knowing their hypocrisy, so prepared His reply as not only to prove that “before the king innocency should be found in Him,” but also to show them, that they were now slaves to Caesar, a heathen oppressor, only because they had not rendered due service to God, their only rightful and gracious King. Thus He designed again to convict their consciences, and prove to them, as a nation or political body, that they were now lost,

that there was no life in them, and that they were ready to be dissolved. The arrow appears to be sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies, for “they marveled and left Him, and went their way.”

The nation being thus judged, religion advances to the controversy. It was at this time distracted between the two principal sects of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the former having departed from the truth in the way of, formalism, the latter in the way of infidelity. Representatives of each of these parties now present themselves successively before the Lord, with separate inquiries suitable to their respective errors, and these thus constitute the third and fourth challenge by this deeply revolted nation, of Him who was their rightful King, and Whom they should have rather reverenced and received as the heir of all their nation's glory. The Sadducees hoped to disprove certain divine doctrines by insinuating their apparent absurdity. The Pharisees designed to magnify the law, of which they were the teachers, The former He convicts by showing them their ignorance of the word which they were blaspheming; the latter, by evincing the end of the law, and thus intimating, that while they were desiring to be teachers of it, they understood neither what they said nor whereof they affirmed.

He then, at the end, having answered all these challenges, makes one inquiry of them touching the person of Messiah. But they had no word of wisdom or of knowledge among them: night was upon the prophets; and thus, as a religious or ecclesiastical body, they were found to have become apostate from the truth, and no light to be remaining in them.

Thus then, as a nation and a religion, they were adjudged to be as reprobate silver.

The Sentence of Judgment —23.

The pleadings were now closed—the Jews convicted and silenced—there was no counselor among them, who, when asked, could answer a word: as a religion and a nation, they stood condemned. The Lord then, as in the place of judgment, proceeds to array the matters which were in evidence against them, and to pronounce the solemn sentence.

He takes occasion, however by the way, to instruct both His disciples, and those of the multitude who still apparently heard Him gladly in their respective duties in this state of apostasy. He then pronounces the religion and nation to be guilty of oppression and pride—of having awfully corrupted the truth of God—of having substituted religiousness for righteousness—of deep hypocrisy—of pretending veneration for the prophets of old, and yet doing the deeds of those who persecuted and killed them. He next warns them that they were soon to fill up the measure of their sins, and that, the long-suffering of their much offended God having been continued through the appointed day of grace, they should answer to Him, and the penalty of all the righteous blood which had been shed on the earth be required of this generation.

The Lord closes this sentence with a lamentation over His long and well beloved Jerusalem. He remembered how He had at first chosen it for His rest, and would so often have repaired it with goodly pleasant stones; but He now sees it as lost to Him, and soon to be laid even with the ground, because she had not known this the time of her visitation! The holy and beautiful house, where the fathers had praised Him, was to be left unto their apostate children desolate; nor should the people again see Him thus among them—thus again offering Himself as their King, until by repentance and faith they learn to join with His disciples in calling Him “Blessed.” Then will they take up the words which the prophet has prepared for that glorious and triumphant day, that day of

all days for Israel, when the Head Stone is to be brought in with shoutings of the restored and obedient people. See Psa. 118

Here the Lord's public ministry ended. He now went out and departed from the temple (Matt. 24:1), nor did He return to the city, save in the character of a Lamb prepared for the slaughter. J. G. B.

Chapter 98

The Melchizedek Priesthood of Christ: Part 1

The blessing of Abram by Melchisedec runs thus, “Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand” (Gen. 14:19, 20).

It is familiar to every reader that the apostle uses this as the type of Christ, according to the word of the oath, “Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec” (Psa. 110:4).

We would say a few words on this Melchisedec priesthood of Christ, its extent and blessing. And first, it is not that which Christ the Lord now exercises; not that He is not a priest after that order—we know fully that He is, by the Epistle to the Hebrews, as from the Psalm cited—and not of any other. But the exercise of it is according to the typical character of Aaron's priesthood on the day of atonement, as the same Epistle shows. The whole of this dispensation is as the day of atonement, and typified by it. The High Priest is gone within the veil, with the blood of the sacrifice, even of Himself, His own blood. So there, as yet, He is; Whom the heavens must receive till the time of the restitution of all things, which God hath promised by the mouth of all His holy prophets, since the world began. This then is the time during which the Lord, though a priest after the order of Melchisedec, after the power of an endless life, made with an oath forever ε■ς τ■ διηνεκ■ς, a continuous (not a successional) priesthood; yet exercises it practically for us according to the type of Aaron, though not according to the order as within the veil, on the great day of atonement.

Accordingly the apostle, after declaring the order of His priesthood, enters upon and dwells exclusively in detail upon the Aaronic priesthood, as characteristic of that which the Lord Christ now exercises. He shows Him to exercise it antitypically, within the veil, the priesthood being, in its exercise, now one entirely of a heavenly character. He is gone not within the typical veil, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. The blood is not of bulls and goats, with which the patterns of things in the heavens were purified, but His own blood; those better sacrifices by which the heavenly things themselves could be purified. The very glory with which Jesus is said to be crowned is spoken of in the words in which the consecration garments of Aaron and his sons after him, are described in Exodus (compare Heb. 2:7 and Ex. 28:2 in the LXX) The whole of the eighth and ninth chapters show the present exercise of the Lord Christ's priesthood to be after the Aaronical pattern, though He be in no sort after the Aaronical order. It is the very subject and reasoning of the Epistle; and in the ninth chapter the analogy is entered into in detail, so as to enable us to apply the details of the priestly services of the Levitical order to our present condition; as, however imperfectly, is commonly known in the Christian church.

It is manifest, then, that the type of Melchisedec here presented to us, as indicative of the priesthood of Christ, in its exercise leads us to further results and wider exhibition than that in which He now so graciously, and blessedly for us, secures the life and blessing and salvation of His people in heavenly places; Himself far above all heavens, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having by Himself purged our sins. The priesthood of Christ is clearly after the “order” of Melchisedec, and solely so; its exercise now is as clearly after the type of the order of Aaron

solely; and that as exhibited on the great day of atonement within the veil. Not but that there is a great deal exhibited now not therein seen; for the veil is now rent behind Him, and we are enabled to follow Him within and see where He is sat down, to our comfort and everlasting joy. But there is a glory besides, not yet fulfilled; a glory of its own character, a glory properly Christ's, and taught us in this type of Melchisedec, the exercise of which we find yet to come. And all that develops Christ's glory is precious to the saints; it is the Lord's glory, the glory of the Son of the Father, His own glory as well as the Lord's glory. On this I would speak a little.

The priesthood of Melchisedec is then that royal dominion of priesthood in which, as representing the most high God, and speaking for man to Him, He blesses from Him (as now in His possession) heaven and the uttermost parts of the earth, through and in the seed of God. We find even in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, the first great type of earthly and Gentile dominion but opening out of its corruption. His greatness reached unto heaven, and his dominion to the end of the earth: and this is put in such strong light that the Adamic dominion is (Dan. 2:38) in a remarkable manner attributed to him. He may have been guilty, and the first exhibition of Gentile apostate dominion, still this characteristic of universal dominion is attached to it. He was the man (in whatever pride of character) set in power.

The mystery was to be brought out in him of his non-acknowledgment of God in it; and the seven times of a beast's heart in this selfish and proud dominion; the man of the earth, not the Lord from heaven acting as man in the power of righteousness; the king of Babylon, not the Son of David, the Lord from heaven, ruling in Jerusalem as witnessing the true God. But it was a dominion given, and typically exhibiting this dominion over the earth, though to illustrate its abuse in man's hand (hence the seed of God even brought into captivity, not blessed as in power and deliverance); α■■ν in which administrative power was put into the hand of man, in the commission to kill whoever killed, which was given to Noah. The other characteristic of the evil and apostasy of it was the setting up a false god, an image: the result was that God was owned by the king “the Most High God.” God is acknowledged in this character, and the seven times punishment comes, till he knows that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will. Thus much for all short of dominion in heaven, though his greatness reaches to that earthly dominion.

But there is another portion corrupted and debased, the scene of power, however, and blessing. His greatness leaches to the heavens; but what do the revelations of God show us to be in the heavenlies? “The saints of the most high (that is of the heavenlies elyohnin) shall take the kingdom;” but we find that we are wrestling with principalities and powers, with spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies (Eph. 6:12), that is power apostate from God, holding the heavenlies; the earth is, and the heavenlies alike, possessed by evil in present power. We find the saints of the heavenlies (Dan. 7:18) taking the kingdom, and the people of the saints of the elyohnin given the kingdom, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven (ver. 27). In this it is that God as may be seen in Daniel, has His title, of Most High (the second word “most high” in ver. 25 being different in the original from the first given above), that Most High Whom Nebuchadnezzar was obliged and made willing to acknowledge; thus the earthlies and heavenlies, under the name of the Most High, will be set in blessing.

But we have more definite statements on the subject. In the day of the full glory of the Lamb, “there shall be one LORD, and His name one;” “the God of the whole earth shall He be called:” “in that

day shall Jerusalem be called the throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it;" and the Son of man appearing in His glory, King of the Jews, even Jesus of Nazareth, shall be on the throne, and not on the cross; and not Hebrew only, but also Greek and Latin, yea every language of power which despised Him, all join in the inscription of the Lord of glory, even Jesus of Nazareth, This is the King of the Jews; when the earthly kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ is come. But this is not the limit of His glory, though it be much to have destroyed them that destroyed the earth, and fill it with blessing. The mountain of the LORD'S house is established in the top of the mountains, blessing especially to the seed of God, under His righteous reign; all power is given Him in heaven and in earth, and thus we find the blessing identified with the person of Jesus.

Accordingly we find in the promise the purpose of His will in the Ephesians, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times "He should gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are upon the earth." Now the mystery which belongs to us is not merely that we should have the sure mercies of David by virtue of His resurrection; that will be made sure to the Jews in Acts 13:32, 33, 34, in the day when He shall sit upon the throne of David His father, and reign over the house of Jacob forever; all nations serving Him, and the nation and kingdom which will not serve Jerusalem shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. But Jerusalem shall be called the city of the Lord: the Zion of the Holy One of Israel shall be an eternal excellency; its sun no more go down, but the Gentiles come to the brightness of its rising. This will be the portion of the despised ones, in all whose affliction He has been afflicted, over whose apostasy and rejection of Himself He could but weep. Those tears are not shed in vain, but mark a reaping in joy, when the joy shall be as the joy in harvest and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

But we, the members of His body, have a yet better portion, not blessings, great as they are, secured in His resurrection, but to be raised together with Him, and to sit with Him in heavenly places. "He hath blessed us in heavenly places;" and the very purpose of the Epistle to the Ephesians is to show that, made sons with Him, we are to be with Him in heavenly places, the body of Him, the Head to the church over all things. We have not merely the fruits, but the likeness of that exceeding great power, which was wrought in Him, "when God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" (see Eph. 1:19 to ii. 7). Thus when He gathers together in one all things in Christ, we find, as under the blessing of His throne, the Jews in the earthlies the center of blessing, and all nations blessed in them through Him (see Acts 3:25), and the saints in the heavenlies, sitting there as raised with Christ, and having overcome through grace, sitting down in His throne, as He overcame and sat down in His Father's throne; and thus witnesses together of the universal dominion of Him to Whom all power is given and on earth, at once Son of God and Son of man; Lord over all, as well as God over all, blessed for evermore.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 99

The Melchizedek Priesthood of Christ: Part 2

(Concluded from page 349.)

But let us not forget that there is another character (for what of blessing does He not fill?) which we find the Lord here showing forth. He is a priest upon His throne: and here we have the real fall exercise of the Melchisedec priesthood. And now see how all the things referred to are brought together in it. We speak of Christ as priest after the order of Melchisedec in the day of His power on His throne. He had sat on His Father's till His foes were made His footstool; but now, gathering all things in heaven and on earth into one, He sits on His own throne.

The first great evil was, that Satan, sitting in heavenly places, had made the poor inhabitants of earth worship for himself gods many and lords many; and earthly power was associated with false worship and apostasy, as we see typified in the great image set up by Nebuchadnezzar in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Hence misery, also persecution and degradation of the children of God: the corrupter and murderer being in heavenly places, corruption was the portion of his subjects, death of those who were not so exempt. Now that which was specifically opposed to this was this title of the Most High God; so Nebuchadnezzar is bound down to confess the Most High God. And this name we first find in the passage we are considering: “Blessed be Abram of the Most High God.” Now this remarkably concurs with what we find connected with the call of Abram: “Your fathers,” says Joshua (24.), “served other gods beyond the flood.” The call of Abraham, therefore, was not the judgment upon unrighteousness against God alone known and owned, but the call and witness of the Most High God. When the perverseness of manmade gods many and lords many, He was then the One Most High God.

We have seen further that there were the heavenlies and the earthlies united in one, in Christ, Whose was all power in heaven and earth; and here accordingly He is blessed of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth. And as the title of the Most High God is given here and witnessed in the priesthood of Melchisedec, who was priest of the Most High God, so also shall the blessing run in this full and unhindered channel, Possessor of heaven and earth. Oh! what blessing in that day when there shall not be principalities and powers in heavenly places to taint the very source of blessing in powers above: no scene of deceived corruption below to make evil what God had made good; nor spirit of rebellion to bring the curse of opposition to God, the God of blessing, upon the wearied corrupters of their own mercy; but One Whose it is, Possessor of heaven and earth, when the Lord shall hear the heavens and the heavens shall hear the earth, all standing in the priesthood, and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and the corn and the wine and the oil shall hear Jezreel. Oh! what blessing when the Most High takes (as ever in title) possession of heaven and earth, and our High Priest is His High Priest. Thus we have total exclusion of all other gods but One, the only One; the world or heaven above knowing none but One: no creature above or on the earth taken to be a god but the Most High God, known as the Possessor of heaven and earth. What rest in that, what peace and security! While Satan has the power, while those hold the possession subject to his power, sorrow, discord, and death are the

sad and unwelcome companions of man's voyage; he is seduced to every folly, he is but as the convict in the ship—its guidance and its power are in other hands. Now the Most High is Possessor, and where shall be the tempter then? Not in heaven, the Most High possesses that; not on earth, the Most High reaches in His possession to that; and the very ends of the earth shall feel the blessing of His pervading comprehensive blessedness.

But this Melchisedec, though priest of the Most High God, had other characters: he was king of righteousness (comp. Isa. 32); for where righteousness is, there is blessing. He was king of Salem, which is king of peace; the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance forever. The Melchisedec priesthood is the security of the blessings of these from the Most High God; the union of heaven and earth in His person, and the mutual blessing of both known in Him, and the common recognition of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth. But we have also to look at the object of this blessing—Abram. Now naturally Abram is the father of the natural seed. “I know that ye are Abraham's seed,” says the Lord to the Jews. Here then he stood the father of Israel (and in them of the blessing of many nations), blessed from the fullness of the Most High God by the king of peace and of righteousness; the representative of the natural seed of Israel, blessed from on high, in the earthlies, with all fullness of blessings from God most high, Possessor, &c. But Abram stood however, as we know, also as representative of the seed which inherit the heavenlies Christ in mystic sense, as the church. “If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise:” “and they that are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” And thus (though by subsequent development, for it was hidden as yet) he stood as the representative of the heavenly seed also, and the blessing of the Most High found its actual scope as possessor of the heavens: those who in Christ had their place there as well as on the earth gathered together in one in Him. Thus in the title of God, in the priest himself, in the object of the blessing, we find the great character of universality according to the mystery of His will, His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself, “that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He should gather together in one all things in Christ:” the Jews being the objects and channels of earthly blessing; and we, sitting in heavenly blessings, priests with Him, ministers of all blessing and kings withal.

In the character of the priesthood, as exercised in the passage before us, we see the plain distinction from the Aaronical priesthood. That priesthood was a priesthood of intercession. “He ever liveth to make intercession for us,” the church of the living God, in its weakness: here is the constant object of His sure and never-failing care and intercession. He has appeared in the presence of God for us; and, I will add, the people of God (I mean the Jews), though under the cloud of His rejection, are still waiting till the great High Priest shall come forth, the Witness of the acceptance of the blood of the atonement, carried within the veil; and remaining a people, blind indeed, but sustained as the people of God by virtue of that service of intercession, till He shall come forth to bless them in the name of the Lord. We know that He has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; we can see through the rent veil into the holiest of all, and see our Jesus there; and still, though longing and watching for the time of His appearing, are content, because we know that Jesus is glorified, and His glory sure, waiting only till His enemies be made His footstool (and the long-suffering of God is salvation), and that He will surely come, He will not tarry.

But the priestly act of Melchisedec was blessing, not intercession: blessing from the Most High God, blessing the Most High God. Here, then, is the exorcise of the priesthood in its Melchisedec character, the king of righteousness and peace blessing the seed of God's acceptance. A blessed refreshing thought! evil removed, and blessing flowing out through the great High Priest, the Priest of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth, unhindered. How do our hearts long for that day, the coming forth of Him our souls long for, yet know, the universal blessing from the Most High God of heaven and earth! What a word shall be pronounced in that day! How shall heaven and earth ring with the welcome witness of the blessing of the heavenly; the earthly seed be unfettered in its praise; the bondage of corruption gone, whose rejoicing (though God was ever good and showed His goodness is it) was restrained till the heirs of the inheritance of God, joint-heirs with Jesus, were manifested to be sons of God. For lest a cloud should rest on the brow of the heirs of God's inheritance—the church of the firstborn, the creation in bondage, through them, must wait for their manifestation. For its happiness must be dependent on their deliverance for its joy, as suffering through their fault. For neither is the blessing of Abraham thus wide the only thing; but honor redounds and praise on high. “Blessed be the Most High God Who hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand.” This blessing is after the full destruction of the enemies of the people of God, after the victory over the gathered kings and great ones of the earth, even “the hosts of the high ones” also “upon high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.” For there is one Most High, Who is Possessor of both, and one King Melchisedec, King of Salem, where praise waits for the God of all the earth. Thus is the echo above and below in that center of both, one in Him Who is one with the Father, the Most High God; and Who Himself took on Him Abraham's seed, now come forth in His kingly glory to bless us from God most high, and to bless God from us, the Man of blessing, the blessing Man, the Lord most high.

But we remark in interpretation, most definitely in connection with all that we have said, that it is blessing and refreshment after, and consequent upon, the destruction of all the enemies of those who are represented by Abraham, bringing down and destroying those who destroy the earth, but Himself the servant of refreshing. All victory then was but in some sort weariness, for victory if a time of joy is a time of weariness: if we had none to meet after it, it would be the sorrowful consciousness of destruction; we had waited and were left alone. Yet it is not so with us, but in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps, joy of deliverance. And who shall be there to refresh? Even that One Who comes forth to bless. He brings forth bread and wine, the bread of Salem where the King dwelt, but now the Servant of the victors, to give the joy of deliverance, and the refreshing of love; the wine of the kingdom drank new—great deliverance to their parched lips, that they may open in refreshment, and praise, and speak and think of Him, how great soever, Who brought it forth, their Melchisedec making them to sit down to meat and coming forth to serve them, ever His joy being in blessing; the Servant of that blessing always though beyond controversy, the less is blessed of the greater.

Thus then we have in this little sentence the accomplished character of the Most High God, over and as to all things in heaven and earth, the one true God, known in blessing, universal blessing; and the unity of all things in Christ, the center of all this blessing, the benediction priesthood of Melchisedec, the blessing by Him of all the redeemed of God. This is consequent upon the victory of these over all their confederate enemies, and the deliverance of every captive, and they are all

made partakers of the bread and wine of the kingdom, brought forth for the joy, and His own rest and delight, by the King of Salem—of righteousness and peace, making them to sit down to meat and coming forth to serve them. It was the King (Luke 12) Who did this on His return. The victory over, the refreshment, as the joy of it from the blessed source, the blessing from His own mouth, the blessing of the Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, proved so in His redeemed, to whom He gives the joy and inheritance—the habitation of both.

May the blessing of Melchisedec, of Christ our Lord, the King, dwell on our spirits; may we see it in Spirit, and may it be our everlasting portion, now as the service of His intercession for us, the Head, the Witness, and the Leader of all our praise, in the ages of the fullness of blessing (even when God shall be all in all) as now in the poor congregations of His saints. How imperfectly all the joy of this could be declared, our own enjoyment of it must surely tell. May the Spirit of our God teach a more skilful tune to those who may take the lesson into their hands, because the chord struck unskillfully has awakened the thoughts of praise in their hearts. And, after all, our dying notes here are but poor witnesses to that new song which we shall sing in abiding notes of praise. And may the sweetness of the instrument itself strike some heart as yet untuned. To hear or know how sweet is the melody of heaven, of Jesus' praise, they and we have yet to learn, in the hope and glory of the blessing which rests not only in His hand, but is in His heart toward the redeemed of God in full creation; for we are called to inherit a blessing.

Chapter 100

A Minister of the Sanctuary: Part 1

It is profitable to seek to place ourselves in the circumstances of those to whom the New Testament scriptures were immediately addressed. Not that the same scriptures are not immediately applicable to ourselves; they are so because applying to that which is essential and characteristic. But by placing ourselves among those first addressed, we shall better discern the way in which the Holy Ghost regards and uses the circumstances of the saints in communicating truth unto them. Indeed when circumstances are thus duly regarded, we shall find perspicuity given to many statements which otherwise might be general or vague; and this will be found especially the case when any direct contrast with the habit of thought and tone of feeling of those addressed is intended.

A Hebrew under the law moved in a religions atmosphere. From his childhood be had been accustomed to look with veneration on the goodly temple. He was instructed concerning sacrifice and incense. He was brought up to revere the consecrated priesthood. The priest in his consecrated garments, coming forth to bless the worshipping people, must have been an impressive, though familiar, object to him. He must necessarily have attached the most solemn importance to the unseen work of that priest within the holy place.

Now suppose such an one as this, taught of God, and so receiving His testimony concerning Christ: he believes on Jesus, owning Him as the Son of God, the Christ of God, and the Lamb of God. He finds peace in his soul unknown before; and he has confidence with God through Jesus Christ, by Whom he has now received the reconciliation.

We know that thousands of Hebrews were thus brought into light and peace through faith in Jesus; to such was the Epistle to the Hebrews primarily addressed.

But how would such believers stand in relation to their former associations? Having personal peace of conscience through the blood of Jesus, would they continue worshippers according to the order of that economy in which they had been brought up? No. That which gave them peace would destroy every old association. Having learned the preciousness of the blood, by finding through it remission of sins, they would have to learn it as equally precious, because by it they were redeemed from the “vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers.” They would have access as worshippers into heaven itself—and that too as a holy priesthood—there to “worship the Father in spirit and in truth.”

The consequence must be that, in the city of solemnities itself, such an one finds himself in the wilderness. He can no longer have fellowship with the multitude who keep holy-day. His temple and his High Priest are now in heaven; and if he went up to the temple in Jerusalem at the hour of prayer, he there has to testify that Israel are blindly groping amidst the shadows, and that all the promises of God are Yea and Amen in Him, Whom they had slain, but Whom God had exalted by His own right hand. But, such an one, though full of heavenly communion and intelligence, would appear, to the eyes of those around him, as though he had been cut off from Israel; yea, he might

actually have been put out of the synagogue (John 16:2). If he would speak of worshipping God, they would have cast it in his teeth that he had neither sanctuary, nor altar, nor sacrifice, nor priest! Hard indeed must it have been to have maintained that he had all these, when apparently he could not point to one of them. Hard indeed to hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope steadfast unto the end. But with a single eye to JESUS all this was possible. Yea; there ought to have been a confidence and rejoicing in the assertion of what he had found, as far superior to all that he had left. All he had left was visible and present indeed—things which were palpable to sense; and all he had found was known only to faith; but still he could say what he had. He could testify that the only value of all that God once established amidst Israel was found in its representing that which he now in substance knew in heaven. And he could therefore say, Taste and see that the Lord is gracious.

But how strange and irregular must it have appeared to such to assemble for worship without any single visible essential of worship: no prescribed or consecrated place; no sacrifice; no ministering priest! But here came in the profession—that all these they had. “We have,” says the apostle, “such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man.” Throughout this Epistle the apostle takes most lofty ground. He takes his place as one with us—i.e. one of the church—and tells out what we have. He will not allow any pretension to interfere with ours. And he seeks to stir us up to the holding fast of our profession. But has there not been sad declension here? We have been false witnesses of the grace of God; as though He had not blessed us already so abundantly that we can, to the glory of His grace, challenge every pretension and assert our profession to be yet higher. Oh! that the Lord would lead our souls consciously to take this standing, that by it we might be able to contradict every pretension of the world and of the flesh, whether religious or otherwise. “We have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens.” “We have a hope as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail.” “We have an altar whereof those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.” And we have “a minister of the sanctuary.”

Let us now turn to the consideration of the Lord Jesus, as this “Minister of the sanctuary.”

The apostle Paul was not a minister of the sanctuary; worshipped there through the ministry of Another. He had as much need of this ministry as any of his converts. He stood on the same level with them, in relation to ministry in the sanctuary. He had indeed a most blessed ministry, in a peculiar sense his own—the ministry of reconciliation among the Gentiles. He had received the reconciliation through Jesus Christ Himself, and, by his preaching, others likewise received it; he could speak of it as special grace, that he should have been put into the ministry: “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer and persecutor and injurious.” But he was not called out from the multitude of believers, as the priest was from the multitude of Israel, to minister for them before the Lord (Hebrews 5); though he surely was a chosen vessel to bear the Lord's name to the Gentiles, and though he had a certain place of authority and eminence in the church itself. But however distinct may have been his ministry—or even ministries, he was one of a common priesthood. He well knew that there were but two ranks in Christian priesthood; the Great High Priest, and the priests. He was one of the priests; and therefore though he could magnify his office as an apostle of the Gentiles, he could not magnify his priesthood. Hence he writes authoritatively as the

apostle; while before the Great High Priest he is but a brother among brethren. The great subject of priesthood, which he so largely discusses in the Epistle to the Hebrews, demanded that the apostle should himself take the place of a worshipper; that thus his own peculiar office might sink into nothing before the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Thus does the apostle acknowledge and declare that Jesus, the Son of God, alone is the representative Priest of the saints, and that He has no representative priest on the earth. Would that in this Paul had had more successors!

The apostle Paul then was a minister of the gospel to every creature under heaven, and a minister too of Christ's body (the church) on earth (Col. 1:23-25); but it was not by intervention of his ministry that any worshipped. The disciples needed his instruction and guidance, and were to know that he had authority; but they were enabled to worship as well in the absence as in the presence of the apostle. He might have led their worship, or he might have followed others in it. His office was lost, so to speak, when they stood together in the attitude of worshippers before the Great High Priest. He might have prayed with the disciples (as Acts 20:36), or they with him (as Acts 21:5). It is indeed most important clearly to distinguish between the common standing of all regenerate persons as priests unto God, and diversities of ministry. Paul and Barnabas were set apart (Acts 13) for a distinct ministry to the Gentiles; but this was not setting them apart as ministers of the sanctuary. They could be ministers of the sanctuary in no other sense than that in which all saints minister there. If they presumed to more than this, they must deny either the proper standing of the saints of God, or the alone place of the Son of God. For in the sense of being “ordained for men in things pertaining to God” Jesus is the ONLY Minister of the sanctuary. It is therefore no light matter to set up such a pretension as that which an ordained priesthood or clergy certainly does. It interferes with the prerogative of Jesus. It is a fearful instance therefore of human presumption or ignorance.

The sanctuary in which Jesus ministers is not on earth, as that was in which Aaron ministered, but in heaven itself. But it is nevertheless true that God has now a ministry on earth as well as a ministry in heaven. But these ministries differ most essentially. The ministry on earth goes forth from God to sinners, upon the ground of God's manifested love in the gift of His Son. The ministry of the sanctuary is a ministry on behalf of those already brought nigh unto God by the blood of Jesus. In the former there is nothing whatever priestly. The minister of the gospel does nothing for the sinner; for we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; but he proclaims what God has done, what God has wrought, and what God declares. On the other hand, the Minister of the sanctuary is actually occupied with doing something for the worshippers—for those who have already come to God through faith in Jesus, and who have free access into the holiest of all. The minister of the gospel has to tell sinners of the work of sacrifice; a work done on earth; a finished work, never to be repeated. But the work of the Priest is continuous; a work on behalf of believers alone; a work for the true worshippers, and which is carried on in heaven. To confound these ministries is sad confusion indeed. To make the ministry of the gospel priestly in its character is to deceive sinners into the thought that they are worshippers; and it is at the same time entirely to obscure the blessed ministry of reconciliation. Nor is that error less dangerous which has confounded the ministry of the Spirit, by gift, in the church, with the true service of the One. Minister of the sanctuary. It is an awful invasion of His office to suppose that any in the church are peculiarly priests for the rest.

Now if this great truth has been sufficiently cleared, that there may be many ministers of the gospel, and many specially gifted to minister in the church, but only One Minister of the sanctuary, it remains for us to consider the Lord Jesus in this office. And there are three points on which I would rest: 1st.—the minister himself; 2nd.—the place of his ministry; 3rd.—the character of his service and our special interest in it.

1.— “We have such a High Priest.” The Person of our Great High Priest, and the connection between His Person and His office, having been already rested on in a previous paper, I would now only say, that this language is in its character boasting. And it is rightly so; for we may glory in the Lord. It is right to challenge any comparison with Him; and to leave who will to draw the conclusion. But this is not all that is said of Him here; it is added, “Who is set down at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens.”

It has been noticed already that the attitude of sitting down, contrasted with the standing of Aaron, shows that the One has completed the work of sacrifice which the other never did. But there is this also to be noticed—the place in which He is seated, “on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens.” How every expression of honor and dignity seems to be collected together here! What a seat is this! There is our High Priest seated! And there is this other blessed truth—He has taken His seat there at the call of God. “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Aaron was called of God, but he was never called upon to sit down even in the worldly sanctuary. He was never even spoken with, as Moses, face to face by God. He was not up in the mount with God in the glory as was Moses, he was below with the people. But what a value was stamped by God on the sacrificial work of Christ when He was thus called of Him! The exaltation of Jesus to the seat on which He now sits proves most abundantly the value of the blood He has shed. How precious that blood must be to God—how perfect its efficacy in His sight! Let us often meditate on the dignity of our High Priest as shown, not only by His Person, but also by the seat unto which He has been called of God; remembering that He has taken that seat in consequence of His having “by Himself purged our sins.”

The word here rendered “minister” is not the word ordinarily applied to the ministry of the gospel. The apostle Paul does indeed once apply it to himself (Rom. 15)— “the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.” But in that instance the apostle is not speaking of ordinary gospel ministry, but of his own special ministry as the apostle of the uncircumcision. This instance therefore only serves to mark the peculiar force of the term. It properly means one who sustains some distinct and onerous office for the public good; and, in some instances, at his own cost.

The word has been transferred to our language in the word “liturgy,” the public service of God. It might therefore be rendered— “as soon as the days of his ministration (liturgy) were accomplished “(Luke 1:23). Zacharias, as a priest, performed divine service for the people. So it is of the Lord a little below in this eighth chapter, “but now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry” (liturgy); more excellent than that of Zacharias or the Jewish priests. He alone performs divine service for others. He does this as the great public Minister of the saints, in heaven. Any number among the saints might minister and fast before the Lord on earth

(Acts 13); but they did not stand in such a relation to God as is involved in performing a service for others which they could not undertake. No saint stands towards God in such a relation to any other saint—if any assume it, they in this assume the exclusive prerogative of the Son of God.

I believe that our souls are little aware of the effect of looking to any set of men to perform public service for us to God. It must necessarily take the soul away from immediate dependence on the great public Minister, and His divine service in heaven. It is not that every one is qualified to lead the public worship of the saints, any more than that every one is qualified to teach the saints or to preach the gospel. But there are none who stand in the same relation to the church as Zacharias did to the Jews (Luke 1); nor is any one called to perform service for them, so that, if such a person was wanting, the saints could not worship. Let the saints ever remember this, and guard against any intrusion on that office solely belonging to the great High Priest. Divine service is now performed in heaven by the one great High Priest, and He is jealous of the intrusion of any into this His office; as He was when Korah and his company intruded into the office of those whom He once ordained to perform divine service on the earth.

Divine service then is only performed for us in heaven. We may, i.e. all Christians may, perform it on earth before the Lord, as they of Antioch did (Acts 13). I do not at all doubt the antiquity of liturgies, nor raise any question as to their spirituality; but this I may safely affirm, that not a vestige is to be found in the New Testament of an ordered ritual; and that a liturgy could have had no place in the church, till it had lost the sense of the One Who performs divine service in heaven, by going back to the pattern of an earthly priesthood. And how all the system with which we now see liturgies connected shows that such declension there has been! That such was the tendency even in the apostles' days, the Epistle to the Hebrews abundantly proves. That some had drawn back and neglected the assembling of themselves together is distinctly stated. And as the Spirit of God in this Epistle expressly meets such a condition of things, this Epistle becomes of peculiar value to the saints in days like the present, when Satan is so plainly working in the same way.

Remember it is no question between the comparative advantage of one ritual above another; or whether there may not be evangelical truth and spiritual breathings in a liturgy; it is a much more solemn question. It is a question concerning the assumption by men of an office belonging alone to the Son of God. Korah and his company might have intended to adhere ever so strictly to the directions for priestly service; but that was not the question—it was one of personal intrusion into an office unto which God had not called them. Indeed they perished with censers and incense in their hands: the controversy of God was with them. And just so it is of all false assumption of office in the church. It is not a question of what may or may not be done in the office, it is the intrusion into it which is so fearful a sin. For is not reproach cast upon the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven—is He not trodden under foot—if the thought is allowed of the necessity of any one person, or any order of persons, to perform divine service for us on earth? “WE HAVE,” blessed be His name, “a minister of the sanctuary” always performing divine service for us above. Be it our souls' joy to know it more and more!

Chapter 101

A Minister of the Sanctuary: Part 2

2.—We must now glance at the place of His ministry, His “more excellent ministry:” “A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man.”

Moses was indeed faithful; he did everything, “as the Lord commanded Moses,” unto the most minute detail. Everything was made according to the direction of God; all the vessels of ministry were arranged in the order prescribed. “And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle, and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle; and Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” This was the tabernacle which man had pitched, beautiful indeed and glorious, yet not the true tabernacle; it was only the shadow of that. And now the shadow is past; as it is said, “a shadow of good things to come but the body is of Christ.” But still, do not our minds linger around the earthly shadows, and become occupied with the things made with hands, instead of those which are made without hands?

In the true tabernacle there is no human instrumentality whatever; all is of God. The furniture and the vessels, all so curiously wrought, are now only to be found in the various graces and several offices of the Lord Jesus Christ— “the body is of Christ.” And all these are now displayed and exercised in heaven for us; He can stand in the immediate presence of God, there presenting for us His own fullness of excellency. Moses, the servant, could not bear the glory conferred on the tabernacle be had pitched; he was much inferior to that which his own hands had reared; but Christ, as a Son, is over His own house, and is Himself its furniture and its glory.

What a solemn lesson are we taught here concerning earthly and human things! Human instrumentality—that which is “made with hands” — “of this building” (creation)—whether with respect to place, persons, or things, ever fails, and is all disowned of God. Nothing will stand but that which is “made without hands,” i.e. of God. Men may think they honor God by rearing magnificent buildings, and dignifying them with the name of temple, or house of God; but they cannot be the true, because man, and not God, has founded them. Their device and their order all show them to be of the earth. It is well, indeed, if the very appearance of our worship here testifies that it is not of the worldly order and pattern. And this will be so, the more we realize that the place of worship is now changed from earth to heaven. There it is that the Minister of the sanctuary exercises His most blessed office. The Lord Jesus Christ exercised no such ministry on earth, “for if He were on earth He should not be a Priest;” and, therefore, our place of worship must be heaven, because there are no accredited priests of God on earth to offer gifts, or to perform divine service (verse 4).

3.—And now briefly as to the ministry itself. For the Lord Jesus Christ ministers onto God in the priest's office; ministering for us in it— “we have such a High Priest.”

The ministry of Aaron before God was in one of its parts representative. He bore the names of the children of Israel on his shoulders and on his heart

“when he went into the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually.” This blessed ministry the Lord Jesus sustains for us; but not occasionally, as Aaron when he went in, but constantly; He appears in the presence of God for us. He ever presents the saints before God, as associated, with all His own fullness of excellency and glory. And this in the presence of God within the vail, as it is said, “whither the forerunner is for us entered.” And again, “for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” How blessed is this, our names written in heaven, not in precious stones, but as “a seal upon his heart, and as a seal upon his arm!” In manifesting His own perfectness and glory in the presence of God, Jesus appears for us! The real identification of the church with Christ, was but faintly shadowed by the garments of glory and beauty worn by Aaron.

Then there was also the ministry of incense. This was a most precious ministry, because it was the medium of the worship of the people. But the offering of incense—all variously compounded as it was—was only occasional, and it might be interrupted. The fragrance of it was not perpetually before God. The plague had begun among the people, destructive judgment had come forth, when Moses bid Aaron “take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense.” All this had to be done, before Aaron could run into the congregation and stand between the dead and the living. “Behold, the plague was begun among the people; and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people and the plague was stayed” (Num. 16). But now the ministry of incense is perpetual; “He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” Hence He is able to save right through, from the beginning to the end. No plague of destructive judgment can come forth against the saints because of this. They are constantly upheld in perfectness by the power of the intercession of Jesus. It is this which ever keeps them in the right place before God, however infirm or erring, here.

The blessedness of the ministry of Him Who ministers for us in the true tabernacle is that it is entirely independent of us. It is by Him for us. Our conscious enjoyment of it will depend indeed on our walk, on our humbleness, on our self-judgment, on many things; but the ministry itself depends alone on our unfailing High Priest. He is a faithful minister ever performing His functions in a manner well-pleasing to God, whether our souls are realizing the value of what He is doing or not. Every saint is upheld by the intercession of Jesus, even in his most thoughtless mood. Advocacy is part of the work of grace—grace that provides for the putting away our every sin, and aiding our every infirmity, and bearing our every waywardness, in order that we may never be out of the presence of God. Hence the moment the conscience of a careless saint is reawakened, he may find full and instant access to God, because, though he has failed, the Minister of the Sanctuary has not. Long before he is alive to his failure, he is debtor to the ministry of Jesus for having been kept from falling. Little did Simon think of the sifting power of Satan; but the Lord, Who had prayed that his faith might not fail, could point out to him his danger. And so with us oftentimes. We see our failures, or the might and craft of our enemies, and then how precious is the thought, that the intercession of Jesus for us has been over all! We are led to value the intercession of Jesus after failure or danger is discovered, as surely Peter was; but its real value is, that it is perpetually offered, and perpetually prevalent. However we may fail therefore, the resources of faith can never

fail; for faith reaches out to God, and to God's provisions of grace in Jesus, over every failure. If there be one deeper anguish of soul than another, it surely must be for a saint to become conscious of sin, yet to be without faith to look to God's gracious provision to meet it; but Jesus prays that our faith may not fail.

We are prone to think of the intercession of Christ, as though it was only occasionally exercised on our behalf, and perhaps also as though its exercise depended on our application for it. We know, indeed, that men have gone so far, as to assert that the intercession of the Lord Jesus is only to be called into exercise by the secondary intercession of others, such as the Virgin, departed saints, or the church. How false all this is, I need not stop to show. But even the thoughts found in the minds of true Christians on this subject sadly offend against the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. For His present ministry on our behalf in heaven is based upon the same abundant grace which marked His care of His disciples then on earth. “I have prayed for thee,” was His word to Simon Peter. His own perception of His servant's peril had moved the gracious Lord to pray for him; and hence He could tell Peter of his safety in the very hour when He disclosed to him his danger. And His present intercession above is marked by the same observant and effectual grace. He can form a divine estimate of our necessities, and our difficulties, and our dangers, things to which we are so often and so largely insensible. Yea, He knows how, amidst all these things, we appear in the eye of God Himself; and He even ministers on our behalf, according to the judgments and requirements of that searching eye. Thus are we preserved without spot before God; unfailingly maintained, in the sanctuary itself, in the fragrant perfectness of Christ. Well may the apostle, when recounting the blessings of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus exclaim, “Who is even at the right hand of God, Who ever liveth to make intercession for its.”

In another aspect the present ministry of Jesus is one of offering; as it is said, “Wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.”

Or, as it is said of the law, “In which were offered gifts that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.”

Under the law the worshipper might bring his offering to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, but then the priestly ministration began. The priest must lay it on the altar, where alone it could be accepted of the Lord. The worshipper himself could not offer immediately to the Lord. It was only through the priestly ministration that it was an offering made by fire, a sweet savor unto the Lord. But now it is by the offering of Jesus Himself, once for all, that we are sanctified as worshippers. Jesus gave Himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor; and now whatever comes up to God through Him has the value of His own offering attached to it, and is of a sweet-smelling savor also. Thus God perpetually attests His own value of the offering of Jesus, even by accepting as precious, through Him, all done or offered in His name. To ask in the name of Jesus is therefore of unfailing efficacy, because God is always well-pleased in Him. We know, as priests, the divine estimate of Him through Whom we draw near to offer. What a comfort, then, is it to be assured, that our persons, our prayers, our thanksgivings, and our services, have, all of them, before God the sweet savor of the name of Jesus set upon them. Everything we desire or do, as having the Spirit of Christ Jesus, however mingled, or however feeble, is thus accepted for Jesus' sake.

And, remember, He is a perpetual offerer, as well as a perpetual interceder. He Himself says of those who know not God in Him and through Him, “Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into My lips.” But to us, because of this His ministry for us, the word is, “By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks in (making confession to) His name.”

It was the priest alone who knew how to appropriate the sacrifice; he only knew what was for God, what for himself, what for the worshipper, and what was refuse. It is indeed most blessed for us, that there is a ministry for us which separates the precious from the vile, and which orders all according to God. Our Great High Priest thus ministers for us. He takes up that, which to us seemed so clogged with infirmity, and mingled with impurity, that we can discern no preciousness in it, and separating the precious from the vile, He offers what is really of the Spirit in the full value of His own offering. If any soul is awakened to the desire of serving the Lord, what sorrow have they found in having to learn the wretched imperfectness of all that which they attempt! But if thus we are oftentimes dispirited and ready to grow weary in well-doing, let us remember this present ministration of Jesus for us. Such should know its value, for their labor is not in vain in the Lord. How will “Well done, good and faithful servant,” gladden the heart of many by and by, who here have only deplored their constant failures! Think you, dear brethren, that the Philippians thought their trifling remembrance of the apostle Paul, would have found its way before God as an offering made by fire, of a sweet-smelling savor unto God? But it did. The apostle, in communion with the Great High Priest, could see Him take it up and present it in His own name (Phil. 4:18). Thus they were producing fruit, through Jesus, precious unto God; even as just before the apostle had said to them, “being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God” (chap. 1:11).

Yes, let the saints, as priests, judge themselves and their works, and if they find, as they assuredly will find, but little of the precious, let them know the One Who judges above, and Who delights to take out the precious, and present it to God in His own perfectness. Oh! if it were not for this ministry on high, how could we read the word, “To do good, and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased!”

(Concluded from page 13.)

Chapter 102

Ministry: Part 1

The connection of the Levitical service with priesthood leads to some blessed instruction; because priesthood in its full sense is the connection of man with all that is revealed of God in redemption. Only there is another element to be taken into consideration now—the Father revealed in the Son.

The Levites were first wholly given to God, according to the efficacy and cleansing power of Christ's sacrifice (in type). Then, for their service, they were given to Aaron, and accomplished their appointed tasks. Now it is only under the hand and at the disposition of the priest, they can act, though their service be appointed.

So we: the priesthood is for man, but to God, and is based on all that in which Christ, in connection with man's lost estate, has glorified God, and in which all that God is in love, grace, righteousness, majesty, truth, and holiness, is glorified, and that, in bringing man to Him in knowledge of all He is, and formed into blessing, into God's blessing for God's glory, according to it, of which Christ is the fullness. For the veil is now rent, and the way into the holiest open: we enter then, He appearing in the presence of God for us.

So it is, when Christ is ascended up on high, having gone down to the lower parts of the earth, and then gone up on high so as to fill all things according to His redeeming work, that He gives gifts of ministry, so as to bring saints to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. And it is only as coming from this excellent fullness and nearness to God, that we can exercise true ministry: the spring, quality, subject, and resulting effect in conforming souls to it, are all there. There is, besides this, the revelation of God Himself, of the Father in the Son. But this follows the same rule. He comes forth from the Father and manifests Him; but it is ever as in His bosom.

Chapter 103

Ministry: Part 2

The following observations on ministry are not presented with a view to controversy; but to throw light on a subject on which much controversy has been expended. It is a subject, moreover, of sufficient dignity and interest, to lead us above the mists of theological discussions, and into the enjoyment of the pure light of heaven, from whence true ministry emanates.

It may be well as a preliminary to give its true place, and proper aspect, to the idea of ministry; for, it appears to me, that the importance of it has scarcely been fully apprehended. Its details may be taken up afterward.

I.—COMPARISON BETWEEN THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD

AND THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL.

The existence of ministry is consequent on the nature of the present dispensation; and, in saying this, we ascend very high to discover its source. For the nature of this dispensation is nothing less than the sovereign grace and energy of God's love.

The position and the character, which distinguish the servants of God, are always and necessarily in unison with the principles of the relation which exists between God and men. When God only recognized certain families, the head of the family was its priest and prophet. We find examples of this in Abraham, Noah, and the other patriarchs. But this principle acquires a more general and important application, when a whole dispensation is in question, as in the case of Judaism and Christianity. The ways of God, and the principles of His dealings with sinners, are there unfolded with many more details for the conscience, and more distinctness and splendor as to the accomplishment and the revelation of grace.

Observe accordingly the marked distinction between these two dispensations. In Judaism, under mount Sinai (where the, law was given, and those ordinances established which regulated the intercourse between the people and God) we have a people already formed and recognized as such before God, a people whom God had already brought to Himself (Ex. 19); whose existence and whose rights depended on their being the children of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and who—with few exceptions, were perpetuated by natural descent. In a word, they already existed as a people, when God entered into covenant relationship with them; for it pleased God to try if man so privileged, and put in possession of every possible advantage for the maintenance of his position, could stand before Him.

The work and principle of Christianity are altogether different. Christianity supposes man to be lost—it supposes that the trial to which God has subjected him by means of the law, has only served to prove more plainly how impossible it is for man whatever his advantages or his privileges, to stand before Him. But this having been proved, Christianity presents to us God in His grace visiting this ruined race: beholding the Gentiles sunk in ignorance and idolatry, and degraded by the most revolting crimes; finding the Jews still more culpable, having been unfaithful

to higher privileges—and exhibiting both Jew and Gentile as the terrible proof that human nature is fallen and corrupt, and that in the flesh good does not dwell. In Christianity God sees man wicked, miserable, rebellions, lost—but He sees him according to His infinite compassions; He only notices the wretchedness of man, to bear witness to him of His own pity. He beholds, and comes to call men by Jesus; that they may enjoy in Him, and through Him, deliverance and salvation, with His favor and His blessing!

The consequence of the position of the Jewish nation was very simple: a law, to direct the conduct of a people already existing as such before God; and a priesthood, to maintain the, relations which existed between this people and their God—relations which were not of a character to enable them to draw nigh to Him without mediation. The question was not, how to call or to seek those without; but to order the intercourse with God of a people already recognized.

As we have already seen, Christianity has an entirely different character. It, considers mankind as universally lost; proves them in reality to be so; and seeks, through the power of a new life, worshippers in spirit and in truth. In like manner does it introduce the worshippers themselves info the presence of God, Who there reveals Himself as their Father, a Father Who has sought and saved them. And this is done, not by means of an intermediate priestly class who represent the worshippers because of the inability of the latter to approach a terrible and imperfectly known God; but it introduces them in full confidence to a God, known and loved, because He has loved them, sought and washed them from all their sins, that they might be before Him without fear.

The consequence of this marked difference between the relations in which Jews and Christians stand as toward God is, that the Jews had a priesthood (and not a ministry) which acted outwards, i.e., outside the people; while Christianity has a ministry which finds its exercise in the active revelation of what God is, whether within the church, or without, there being no intermediate priesthood between God and His people, save the great High Priest Himself. The Christian priesthood is composed of all true Christians, who equally enjoy the right of entering into the holy places, by the new and living way which has been consecrated for them; a priesthood moreover, whose relations are essentially heavenly.

Ministry then is essential to Christianity; which is the activity of the love of God, in delivering souls from ruin and from sin, and in drawing them to Himself.

On earth then, as regards the relations subsisting between God and man, a priesthood was the distinguishing characteristic of the Jewish dispensation, ministry of the Christian; because priesthood maintained the Jews in their relations with God; and because by ministry Christianity seeks in this world worshippers of the Father. I say on earth, for in truth, when we consider the portion of the Christian in its highest point of view (namely, in that which has relation to heaven), Christianity has its “kings and priests,” that is to say, all saints. The worship of God is not ministry; it is the expression of the heart of the children before their Father in heaven, and of priests before their God, in the intimacy of the presence of Him Who, in His love, has rent the veil, which His justice had opposed to the sinner. and has rent it by a stroke which has disarmed justice, and left her nothing to ask but the happy task of clothing with the best robe those to whom before all entrance had been denied. To suppose, then, the necessity of a priestly order is to deny the efficacy of the work of Christ, which has procured for us the privilege of our presenting ourselves before God. It is, in fact, though not in words, to deny Christianity, in its application to the

conscience, and to the justification of the sinner. It is to overthrow all those relations which God has established that He might glorify Himself, and place man in peace and blessedness. On the other hand, God acting in Christianity according to the active energy of His love towards sinners, Christian ministry becomes the expression of this activity. It has its source in the energy of this love; whether it be in calling souls, or in feeding those who are called and whom Jesus loves.

It is thus presented to us by the Apostle Paul, as one of those things which characterize the gospel of the grace of God.

II. SOURCE OF MINISTRY

“God was in Christ reconciling the world onto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation.” These are the three things which flow from the coming of God in Christ: “reconciling"; “not imputing"; and “committing unto us the word of reconciliation.” Without this last, the work of grace would have remained imperfect in its application; for He Who, in His coming here below, reconciled and “imputed not” —this Jesus needed to be “made sin” for us, to die, and to go away. The work finished remained thus suspended in its application; and the crowning of this glorious work of the grace of God was to commit to man “the word of “this” reconciliation,” according to His own power and good pleasure. There were thus two elements contained in ministry: first, deep conviction and powerful sense of this love; secondly, gifts, enabling to declare to men, according to their necessities, the riches of this grace which animated the hearts of those who bore witness of it. This it is that is presented to us in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25). He that had five talents, as well as he who had two, was actuated by this confidence which grace gives, by the knowledge of the character of his master, and by the confidence engendered in him, both by this knowledge of his master, and by the trust which he saw was reposed in himself. Their abilities and their gifts were not the same. God is sovereign in this respect. He who had only one talent, according to his ability, was wanting in this confidence, which is inspired by the knowledge of God in Christ. He mistook the character of his master. He was slothful, because of the state of his soul; as the two others were diligent from the same cause.

We thus see that the principle of ministry is the active energy of love, of grace, flowing from the faith by which we know God. To touch this is to overthrow the whole in its fundamental principle. In its essence, ministry flows from individual knowledge of the master's character. Grace known, and strongly felt, becomes active grace in our hearts; the only true, the only possible source, in the nature of things, of a ministry according to God.

We see moreover that it is the sovereignty of God, Who gives as He sees good, either natural capacity as the vessel to contain the gift, or the gift, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, out of those treasures which are found in Him, and which He has received for men.

We find ministry based on the same principle, when the Lord says to Peter, “Simon Peter, lovest thou Me?” and, on his reply, adds, “Feed My sheep—feed My lambs.” This leads to the two essential parts of ministry, namely, first, the free activity of the love which impels to call souls to Christ, and second, the service of love which is unwearied in its efforts to edify them when called.

As regards the ministry of the word (for there are other gifts), these two divisions are distinctly presented to us, in the first chapter of the Epistle of the apostle to the Colossians. In the

twenty-third verse, Paul is “a minister of the gospel preached to every creature under heaven;” and in the twenty-fifth verse, “a minister of the body of Christ, the church, to fulfill the word of God.”

As the mainsprings and sources then of all ministry, there are these two things: the love produced in the heart by grace—love which impels to activity, and the sovereignty of God Who communicates gifts as seems good to Him, and calls to this or that service: a call, which renders ministry a matter of faithfulness and duty on the part of him who is called. It is to be observed, that these two principles both suppose an entire freedom from man; who cannot interfere, as either the source or the authorization of ministry, without on the one hand neutralizing love, as the source of activity, or on the other infringing on the sovereignty of God Who calls and sends, and Whose call constitutes duty. Co-operation and discipline according to the word find withal their own place untouched.

Whatever ministry is not founded on these two principles is really no ministry at all. There is no Christian source of activity but the love of Christ, and the call of God.

Ministry: Part 3

III. —ON THE POWER OF MINISTRY, AND ON ITS

RESPONSIBILITY.

Having thus briefly considered the question of the source of ministry, which connects itself with the very first principle, and with the existence of Christianity; and which has its being in the activity of the love of God; let us examine the power which works in this ministry, and under what responsibility it is exercised by those to whom it is committed.

1.—Power of Ministry.

The third chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians indicates its general character. It is the ministry of the Spirit.

There are two grand features, which characterize the work of Christ in the world. He is the Lamb of God Who takes away sin, and He baptizes with the Holy Ghost. I pass by the first point, however full of interest, as not belonging to our subject, save so far as it is an object about which ministry is occupied. I rest on the second of those things, by which John the Baptist describes the work and the glory of Christ. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost;” a point which is evidently of the utmost importance, and the spring of all the power and spiritual energy which is to be found in the church. And truly a spiritual energy is needed, that Satan may be combated with success, and that these poor bodies, the flesh being mortified, may become the vessels of testimony and of the power of God.

This power of the Holy Ghost in Man is a most important truth. Jesus Himself was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power. “How,” said Peter to Cornelius, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him.” This was not spoken of His divinity (for He was God before the foundation of the world), nor of His perfection as man (for as born of the Virgin Mary His flesh was holy). He was the Son of God not only when He created the world, but also in the world, as the man born of this same Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost. He had the consciousness thereof when He answered His mother who sought Him in the temple: “Wist you not that I must be about my Father's business?” Neither does it refer to His love: His mere presence in the world was love itself. But in addition to this, John the Baptist sees the Holy Ghost descending like a dove, and remaining upon Him. “God had anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power;” and then, for the first time, filled with the Holy Ghost, He begins His ministry, acts officially as Son of Man in the world, and endures the temptations by which the second Adam was to be tried, in order that He might assert His title beyond the power of Satan; while on the contrary the first Adam had fallen under that power. Then it is that we see Him casting out demons by the Spirit of God, and saying to His mother, “What have I to do with thee?” His whole life was the power of the Holy Ghost in ministry. By the Holy Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God. He was much more than man; and yet was He a man—this Jesus of Nazareth “whom God had anointed

with the Holy Ghost and with power."

Our part in all this has another and different element. In Him it was man, the second Adam on earth, Himself accomplishing, in the face of Satan, all that the spiritual man could offer to God in His life. His voice was not heard in the street. He must needs be perfect, and as man overcame Satan in that world in which man had failed, and in the very circumstances in which man found himself in consequence of his fall. This is what that precious Savior has perfectly accomplished.

Up to this time, however, He had not become the commencement of a new order of things.

The first Adam failed in the garden of Eden, in the very place where he was surrounded by blessings. It was when driven from it, that in his fallen state he became the head of a fallen race, in this world of sin and rain. Jesus, the second Adam, must needs first be perfect, and, personally, gain the victory over Satan in the midst of the ruin: a victory, so complete, and so perfect, that, having bound the strong man, He could spoil his goods; and that His name, in the mouth of those whom He sent, sufficed to cast out demons. But to commence a new world of glory and of blessing, to redeem His church, and make her like unto Himself, according to the power by which He is able to subdue all things to Himself, it was necessary that He should overcome Satan in the last strong hold in which he held men captive, by the judgment, and under the sentence, of God Himself; that is to say, in death. It was necessary, that He should undergo, to the full, the last effect of sin, as the result of the wrath of God, and of the power of Satan, as well as of the weakness of man. This He did.

Thus, the wrath of God having taken its course (except as to those who reject Jesus); all the power of Satan being destroyed in the very seat of that power, as regards man; death being overcome, his gates of brass burst open—Jesus, the second Adam, Victor over Satan and death, Heir, as Son of man, and by the righteousness of God; upholding all things by the word of His power; the image of the invisible God, and the expression of His glory—Jesus, conformably to the counsels of God concerning Man, begins to act as the Head of a new world, and of a new creation. Nevertheless, although He had abolished all that was against us, although He had triumphed over Satan on the cross, and led captivity captive, the time for the deliverance of creation had not yet come. The present was only the period for the witness of the power of Jesus, in the midst of a creation still in its fallen state, and from whence Satan was not yet expelled. It was the time for gathering the church of His elect out of the world, that He might nourish and cherish them, until they should be presented to Himself in glory; that is, in a word, for making the church on earth the receptacle of the power possessed by the Son of Man at the right hand of God. He, Who now filled all things, having first descended into the lower parts of the earth, and then again ascended up far above all heavens—He had received gifts for men. Eph. 4:8-10.

The day of Pentecost was neither a moral change of the affections, nor the breath of life from the risen Jesus—all this had already taken place. The disciples were waiting at Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high. Having been endued therewith, no doubt this acted powerfully on their affections, because it revealed Jesus with power. But the life and affections were already there, even as, in a still higher sense, the life and affections of the Son of God were in Jesus before the Holy Ghost descended upon Him as a dove. Jesus took His place, according to the counsels of God, with the faithful in Israel, in the baptism of John "fulfilling all righteousness;" and was then anointed for service among them. By virtue of His death and

resurrection, He placed His disciples in the same relation with God, in which He Himself stood, going to His Father and their Father, and to His God and their God. And He baptized them with the Holy Ghost, as the witness of His glory in heavenly places, and the power which identified His disciples with Himself in this glory. It is very certain from the words of Jesus Himself (Acts 1), that the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and that nothing which the apostles had previously received was the fulfillment of this promise; for, He says to them, “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

The Gospel by Luke, of which the Acts of the Apostles is only a continuation (the Acts taking up the subject in almost the same words as those of this Gospel), presents to us the Lord Jesus specially as Son of man; Head of a new order. That Gospel presents this truth morally; the Acts exhibits it in power.

The Gospel by John, although touching the same subject, presents it under another form. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, Advocate or Comforter, sent by the Father in His name or by Jesus Himself from the Father. He guides into all truth, shows things to come, and gives them to know that Jesus is in the Father, the disciples in Jesus, and He in them. If I were considering the scriptures relating to the Holy Ghost, I should have to speak of the close of this Gospel, where He is seen as the Spirit of Truth in the midst of the saints, witnessing against the world by His presence, and guiding believers into all truth. It would be necessary to consider all those passages where He is presented to us as the seal of redemption, the earnest of the inheritance, and the Spirit of adoption; such as 2 Cor. 1, Gal. 4, Rom. 8, and many others. But I am reminded that, if the thought of the presence of the Holy Spirit, that mighty Comforter, draws the heart in that direction, our subject is MINISTRY—a subject the consideration of which is sufficiently important to magnify the Spirit.

Chapter 105

Ministry: Part 4

(Continued from p. 260.)

To return to our subject. It is because of these truths of which we have been speaking, that we find in St. John that the Holy Spirit “was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified;” for the presence of the Holy Spirit here below was the consequence of the glorifying of Him Who here below had fulfilled all things.

And here I would desire, in connection with the point which has been occupying us, to say a few words on the 3., 4., and 7. chapters of John. In the third chapter the Holy Spirit is seen as quickening; in the fourth chapter He is the power of communion—of true communion—in the seventh chapter, the Son of Man, being as yet withheld from showing Himself to the world, declares that rivers of living waters shall flow from the bellies of those who should believe. For the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified; and it was then that He (the Spirit) was to become the witness of the glory of the Son of Man, and to bear testimony on earth to this glory.

What a source of ministry is now opened to us! The love of God in Christ towards poor sinners! but this love fulfilled in the glory which was consequent upon the death of the Son of Man! Who had descended into the lowest depth of man's misery, had there glorified God, and was now Himself glorified as man. In what a position is ministry thus placed! what a glorious function! and how does man sink into nothing before it! It is, indeed, the ministry of the Spirit, and of righteousness. For, if the love of God be the source and subject of it, the righteousness of God is also seen in the glorifying of the Son of Man Who had glorified Him upon earth, and more than re-established all that glory of God which was belied, and, in appearance, denied by the victory of Satan and the ruin introduced into God's creation. And hence we may learn why there were also healings and miracles attached to this ministry (at least, it is one reason for them); for miracles were likewise a confirmation of the most important part of it, namely, the life-giving word. But they were also a testimony to the victory of the Son of Man over Satan, and to His right of blessing over creation, notwithstanding all the evil which is there discovered. A time was to come when all this evil would be removed; but that period was not yet arrived. Nevertheless, He Who was to accomplish it was exalted, and was manifesting, in the midst of the evil, this power in man. Thus, the prince of this world, he who was the mover of all the evil which is found therein, was in part judged. And this is why the miracles were also called the powers or miracles of the world to come; because then all this evil will be subjugated and arrested, by the presence of the Son of Man; and the miracles were an earnest of the blessed result—wrought by the power of the Spirit, come down from on high. In this respect, it is indeed but a poor exhibition of the glory of the Son of Man that we present before the world. May we, at least, have the wisdom to acknowledge and confess it.

But these things were, it is true, only accessory. The principal thing was the testimony borne to the love of God; to the victory of the second Adam; and to the work which He had accomplished as Man; a testimony borne by the word, by that word which had created; which sustains; which quickens unto eternal life; which nourishes the renewed soul; and which reveals all the glory of

God: the word, of which Jesus is the living fullness.

Considered as ministry of the word; the ministry which manifested the presence of the Holy Spirit, manifested at the same time the sovereignty of God, the miraculous power of Him Who was sent, and the extent and activity of grace.

This ministry was carried on, whether among the Jews, or as in the case of Cornelius, among the Gentiles, by the gift of tongues; Galileans, Romans, speak all languages; man becomes only an instrument in the hand of God, of the Holy Ghost sent down from on high. He it is Who guides, rules, and acts; but He does this in order to convey the testimony of the glory of the Son of Man to all men; and in order, while speaking to them of the wonderful works of God in the languages in which they were born, to draw their hearts by a grace which had come even unto them, towards the power there manifested; and, at the same time, to assert the right of the second Adam in grace over all men. This, while commencing with the Jews, evidently addressed itself to the entire condition of the Gentiles. The judgment of God had separated the nations by confounding their languages, so that they were reckoned by languages, families and nations (Gen. 10 and 11.); and in thus separating them, He had established the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel (Deut. 32: 8). The time for patting an end to all this had not yet arrived; but grace is brought in, and takes the rule, in this state of things. Among the Jews, who were, after all, the most wicked of all the nations, a testimony appears, which uses the very fruit of sin, to show that grace reaches men just where the judgment of that sin had placed them. The Holy Ghost enables Jews to speak all the languages by which men and the hearts of men were divided in consequence of the judgment of God against the pride of the renewed earth.

The subject of this ministry, although the circumstances which accompanied its exercise might manifest to an instructed eye the sovereignty of God, the right of the Son of Man over the nations, as well as His grace towards the Jews who had rejected Him—the subject of this ministry was, at the commencement, solely the glory of the man JESUS, raised from the dead: a glory which was to be the center and rallying point of souls saved by the operation of grace, and constituting the body, the church; a church which thenceforward was to be instructed and governed by this same Spirit.

Jerusalem, which had been, for so long a time, the beloved city, not having submitted itself to this testimony to the glory of Christ, lost the glory of being any longer the center and fruitful source of Evangelical administration. Her citizens had sent a message after the King Who had gone to receive His Kingdom, saying that they would not have Him to reign over them; and, upon the death of Stephen, the whole church is dispersed, “except the apostles.” Thereupon, God, Who ever finds in evil the opportunity of displaying some grace more glorious than that which has been effaced, raises up, independently of the work at Jerusalem, an apostle born out of due time, who was neither “of man, nor by man,” and reveals, at the same time, this unspeakably precious truth, of which this apostle, thus called, becomes the great witness; that the church is one with Christ glorified in heaven—that she is His body, which He nourisheth and cherisheth as His own flesh. Thus disappeared that which Peter had announced to the Jews, namely, that Christ would return to them in grace, as to a people subsisting before Him; and thenceforward, we have to do with the hopes which are identified with Christ in the heavens, with the marriage supper of the Lamb, with the union of the bride and the Bridegroom in heaven, and we may add that thenceforward the

return of Christ here below is entirely in judgment, although for the deliverance of a remnant. This is a point of progress in the ministry and administration of the church, of which the results are full of importance to us.

Consequent upon the full revelation of the union of Christ and the church, we find, in the writings of the apostle Paul, a much greater development of those gifts of the Holy Spirit, corresponding with the position of anyone who, as a member of “the body of Christ,” might possess this or that gift. The same principles, however, are found practically set forth in the writings of Peter.

P.S—In No. 396, p. 263, col. 2, l. 14, read “enemy witnessing.”

Chapter 106

Ministry: Part 5

2.—On Election and on Gifts, as the power of Ministry.

We have already seen, and we have a very striking example of it in the Apostle Paul, that the sovereignty of God is exhibited in ministry as in salvation. “Ye have not chosen me,” saith the Lord, “but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” “He is a chosen vessel unto me,” saith the Lord to Ananias, “to bear my name before the Gentiles,” &c. So that, this sovereignty of God excludes the choice of man, any one who denies the existence of a ministry having diversity of gifts is opposing His sovereignty. But here, on examining the word, we shall find this sovereignty exercised by the Holy Ghost in the midst of the church; we shall likewise find that it is Christ Who gives, and that it is God Who works, all in all.

The first point on which the apostle insists, touching his ministry, as the consequence of his remarkable position, is, that it was neither of men, nor by the medium of man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father.

The objection was often made, that he was not of the twelve—that he was not a regularly appointed apostle. This subject we find frequently discussed in the Epistles to the Corinthians, and to the Galatians. The apostle takes pains to assure them, that his ministry was independent of man: that he had not consulted flesh and blood, but had preached Christ so soon as God had revealed Him in him for this purpose. He founds his authority upon the proofs of spiritual power which he had given. Afterward he confers with the other apostles; he communicates to them his gospel; but he receives nothing. God takes care that unity should exist between Antioch, at that time the center of Gentile evangelization, and Jerusalem, originally, as we may say, the only seat of the church. We see a co-operation, according to existing necessities. Barnabas seeks Paul, who had retired to Tarsus; and Silas determines to remain at Antioch, finding a work to accomplish there. Paul afterward associates with himself other laborers, and desires Apollos to go to Corinth: Apollos refuses. But in all these varied circumstances, Paul most positively repudiates all the pretensions of that Judaism which required, at the same time that it put forth other principles of Judaism (and in order the more easily to give currency to them), a mission from man to authorize his ministry. Indeed it was neither the wisdom nor the arrangement of man, which carried the gospel beyond Jerusalem; it was the dispersion of the whole church, the apostles only excepted. All those that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word; the hand of the Lord was with them, and many believed. Their mission was one which persecution and their own zeal conferred on them.

In truth the church cannot be the source of ministry; for this expression of the power of the Holy Spirit, which ministry is, necessarily precedes in many things the existence of the church: the church is created, called, and formed by means of it. Apostolic ministry, or at least that of the evangelist, precedes necessarily, by the Very nature of the case, the existence of the church (although, after the church is once formed, its members may become evangelists); and the

mission of these apostles, or evangelists, must be directly from Christ, and from the Holy Spirit; otherwise it is absolutely null. The twelve apostles had been sent forth by Christ during His life, although they were specially gifted after His resurrection. Paul, as regards his call to ministry, received it from Christ in glory, having seen that Just One, and heard the voice of His mouth; as to his separation to a special work, he had received the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit at Antioch. They went out sometimes from the bosom of a church, as Paul from Antioch. They might report to the church with joy what God had wrought by them, but they held their office from God, and from Jesus Christ. It was in the name and by the authority of God, and of the Lord Jesus, that they acted, and they recognized none other. They could not please men and be the servants of Jesus Christ. Paul did not scruple to say it was a small thing for them to be judged at a man's tribunal: He Who judged them was the Lord. The Pharisees, it is true, called in question the conduct of Peter in the case of Cornelius; but the God of grace had not waited for their decision. The presence of the Holy Spirit among the Gentiles had justified the fruits of grace and obedience, in the accused apostle, and stopped the mouths of those who complained of the extent and power of this grace.

I see two things in the exercise of this ministry, in the body of the church: 1st, the whole body of which Christ, the glorified Man, is the head, and hence the position of this body as on God's part in the world, there to represent the glory of its Head; and 2ndly, this body, considered as the body of Christ Himself, the beloved Object of His affections; the bride whom He has loved, for whom He gave Himself, and whom He feeds with His own flesh—the church as the instrument of the glory and power of God in the world; and the church as the beloved object of the affections of Christ.

The gifts bear the characters, as it seems to me, of these two relations. The first of these positions is much more general, and, at the same time, has to do more with the responsibility of the church: in the second is involved that which Christ does, and (as to the substance of it) can never fail to do, for His church, His bride. In both, the oneness of the body united to Christ is continually kept in view. In the latter we have the Lord Jesus, the Head, in heaven, but Who nourishes His body till all come to His perfect stature. In the former, although personally Jesus is necessarily excluded from the ministry, He and the church are nevertheless seen as a whole, wherein God is acting before the world in His name, as it is said (1 Cor. 12:12) “So also is Christ.” Accordingly in this case (see the same chapter), the spiritual power of Christianity is contrasted with idolatry. 1st, we have that which distinguishes the Holy Spirit from demons (for the question was concerning spiritual power). The Holy Spirit alone said “Lord Jesus;” and, on the contrary, no one, speaking by the Holy Spirit, said, or could say, “Let Jesus be Anathema.” 2ndly, there were diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; divers services, but the same Lord; divers operations, but the same God, Who wrought all in all. Thus the Spirit, the Lord, and God, are brought forward in connection with the gifts; and it is added, in order that we may see the immediate source of these things in the church, that one and the self-same Spirit divideth to every man severally as He will.

The power of the gift came from the Holy Spirit (comparing the 6th and 11th verses we learn the divinity of the Holy Spirit); but at the same time (the Spirit acting in each with a view to the glory of the Son, as the Son had with a view to the glory of the Father) each became, by his gift, the servant of Christ, as Christ Himself had become a servant in His ministry. The Holy Spirit acts in sovereignty, but ever in the accomplishment of the counsels of God (even as “the Son quickeneth whom He will,” John 5:21); and, being a witness of the glory of Jesus, Son of Man, and Lord, each

one of those in whom He acts becomes the obedient instrument of the Lord. Such operations are however not secondary, nor of any subordinate spirit, nor of any angel; they are the operations of God Himself, and His servants have to do with Him. Thus the apostle, who was gifted for his apostleship by the Holy Spirit, calls himself an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father. He also calls himself the apostle of Jesus Christ, the servant of God, and, speaking generally, “by the will of God.”

In the list which is given to us in chapter xii. of I Corinthians we have, in general, all the gifts which are for the establishment of Christianity, signs to the world, and proofs of the glory of the victory of the Man Christ, and of His rights of government in the church. Evangelists and pastors, that which is now called ministry, are not found there at all. It is rather the aggregate of divine operation and capacity in the body, than the care which Christ takes of the body as being His. Thus, except the gift of teacher, which is connected with that of pastor, all the gifts found here are now lost (at least in their primitive form and character). I speak only of the fact, and leave to others the task of explaining why this has come to pass, and how far it may be justified, or ought to be the case.

This is a very solemn subject for those who value the glory of Christ, and of His church, and who recognize the power of the Holy Spirit.

All these things, although in a certain sense they might constitute a testimony of the love of God, might be exercised without love: the question was, more properly, of power. Accordingly the apostle here shows us a more excellent way. Love or edification ought to have directed the exercise of these things, and at Corinth this was not the case: discipline was needed, as the apostle teaches us in these chapters. The gifts, in themselves, were rather the expression of power. For this reason, the Spirit, as exercising the authority of Christ in the church, regulates and controls the exercise of the gift which He has entrusted to this or that individual; and He even represses it whenever it is not used in love for the edification of the body. This is what we find in the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, it is not so much God operating in the body as a whole, and employing its members for His service to manifest His power; as Christ Who had ascended into the lower parts of the earth, and then ascended, that He might fill all things, having led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, by which He forms and nourishes His body on the earth. Thus its unity, although essentially the same, is here seen as the result of grace, which calls those who are afar off, and those who are nigh, built together as the habitation of God through the Spirit. It is a unity of relation and blessing: one body, one Spirit, one God and Father of all, &c. But, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, the attention of those Christians is directed to their condition in contrast with their state when in idolatry, while there were many gods, and many lords, and, in reality, many demons. It was now one Spirit Who did all; one Lord; and one God Who wrought all in all. It was not dumb idols.

The Epistle to the Ephesians gives us specially the privileges of the church united to Christ. God is “the God of our Lord Jesus,” and also “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” At the end of the first chapter he prays for the blessings flowing from this title of “God” of Jesus Christ. In the third chapter, having developed the mystery which had been confided to him—namely, the union of the Jews and Gentiles in one body, in Christ, to be the habitation of God through the Spirit, being saved and washed by Christ, and united to Him in glory—he seeks the blessings flowing from the

title of “Father” of Jesus Christ, namely, the knowledge of the love of Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost, strengthening the inner man to render him capable of enjoying these things, to the end he might he “filled unto the fullness of God.” Behold the boundless and fruitful sources of blessing to the church, and that to the glory of Him Who “worketh in us,” in the church, throughout all ages, world without end. But until we are perfected, these blessings are accomplished by the Holy Spirit acting in us, in the oneness of the body, according as Christ has received for the members of this body. He, having fulfilled all things, ascended up on high, and received gifts for men; it is He Who has given some apostles, some prophets. We see that the gifts presented here as the fruits of the ascension of Christ are not to be looked at in the light of power acting in the body, within and without, to manifest the glory of God; but that which served to establish and edify the church, as the habitation of God, and the object of the love of Christ, in order that all may come to the measure of his stature.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 107

Ministry: Part 6

(Concluded from page 293.)

Lowliness, love, the bond of peace, are first presented as a walk worthy of our vocation to be the habitation of God in unity. Then follow the individual gifts; “to every one is given” according to the measure of the gift of Christ, the exalted Head of this body.

These gifts are, properly, that which is called ministry. The apostle does not here speak of miracles, of healings, or of tongues; these displays, the signs of power in the face of the world, were not the direct channels of His love to the church. Every gift is a ministry; for as there are diversities of gifts, yet but one Spirit, so there are divers ministries, but one Lord.

By the possession of a gift I become the servant of Christ, from Whom I hold the gift by the Spirit, and Whom the Spirit reveals as Lord.

Hence every gift, in exercise, is a ministry-service discharged under responsibility to Christ. But the gifts mentioned in the fourth chapter of Ephesians are more especially gifts of ministry, of service rendered to Christ in His body, “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” It was work, and not merely signs of power.

We have here enumerated apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. The first two, in the exercise of their highest functions, have laid the foundations of the church, either by revelation, or by the authority of Christ which was committed to them; for it is thus that the apostles were distinguished from prophets. A prophet revealed the mind of God, and his work was in this respect finished. An apostle was sent direct as an architect, authorized by Christ to build His church. They ordained or made rules (1 Cor. 7:17), put in execution, took the oversight, governed, established certain rulers in the churches, and, as having authority, took cognizance of everything that took place in them, in order to regulate it. In a word, they were authorized, on the part of Christ, to found and to build, and to establish rules in, His church. In this sense we have no apostles since they fell asleep. Paul knew that after his departure grievous wolves would come in. Peter takes care, by his Epistle, to remind them of what he had said to them.

But it appears to me that, in a lower sense, there may be apostles and prophets in all ages. Barnabas is termed an apostle; Junias and Andronicus are called apostles. It is said of them that they were “of note amongst the apostles” (Rom. 16:7, 8); so that there were others who were not named.

As regards the revelation of God, it is complete; as regards any authority to found the church, it no longer exists; neither the twelve, nor Paul, have had any successors. The foundation cannot be twice laid; but one may act under an extraordinary responsibility as sent by God, and by a faith which depends upon communications made only to him who receives them (although there can be no new truth which would not be found in the word), a line of conduct which is only vindicated in the eyes of others by its resulting in blessing to the children of God. This may still exist. We may

cite as examples, without pretending to justify all that they did, a Luther, a Calvin, a Zwinglius, and perhaps others. So for prophets, although there be no new revelations of truth, there may be, as proceeding from God Himself, a power of applying to the circumstances of the church, or of the world, truth hidden in the word; such as, in practice, might render the ministry prophetic. Moreover, all those who expressed the mind of God to edification were called prophets, or at least prophesied.

We may add that the apostles never speak as if the church would last long, or as if the faithful were not always waiting for the coming of Christ.

Teachers and pastors, to guide and to instruct the flock, are, in this Epistle, joined in one gift (for the Holy Spirit is speaking of edification), although the gift of teacher is mentioned separately elsewhere. It is by these gifts that Christ nourishes, cares for, and strengthens the sheep, as it is by evangelists that He calls and brings them to Himself. The distinction between teacher and pastor is easily perceived, although connected together; for the one is occupied about the things taught, the other about the sheep. An obvious distinction, but a very important one; because there is an affectionate interest in the progress of the sheep, an exercise of heart in the gift of pastor, a care for the sheep, which is not necessarily presupposed for the simple act of teaching. It is thus that this gift of pastor gives occasion to the most tender affections, and to the strongest ties, as did also the gift of an apostle, and as does the gift of the evangelist in regard to those who have been converted through his testimony.

I notice here that the apostle does not speak of gifts, but of the persons who possessed them. He gave some pastors and teachers. The gift, without doubt, was in the vessel; but God had attached it to the person; and this person, known by his gift, was given to the church. We cannot be united to a gift, but to a person. God has given not a mere apostolate, but an apostle.

It is certainly possible that he who possesses the gift may be unfaithful; even that the gift itself may be withdrawn, or at least that it may not be in exercise. But generally we have to do with a person having a certain function permanently committed to him; we have to do with a joint of the body, and that joint is always that joint.

3.—Responsibility of Ministry.

Furthermore, the exercise of gift, although subject to the directions of the word, is in no wise dependent on the will of the body, but on that of the Head. He has given; He has placed in the body such or such a joint; and they are responsible to the Head for the fulfillment of their functions. The wisdom of the Head is disputed, if the employment of the gift be gainsayed. This responsibility is to be exercised in love, and for edification, not otherwise; but responsibility to Christ cannot be set aside; nor may we touch Christ's claims upon the service of His servant.

The circumstances of the church may occasion difficulties in this matter; but humility and faithfulness to the Lord will always know what to do. Love and obedience always find the path. The Spirit will ever be with him who obeys Christ in love. This responsibility of the individual to Christ is of the utmost importance—as important, in its place, in regard to service flowing from gift, as it is when the question is one of moral conduct. Whatever affects this affects the rights of Christ, and the responsibility from which none can be exempt. We sometimes see both destroyed by the spirit of corrupted Christianity, and men exempted from their individual responsibility in matters of moral

duty. God, however, never foregoes His claims upon them.

To hinder this service does not hinder heretics or false teachers. The flesh, in the most true Christian, must be everywhere kept down; and it needs to be so in the use or abuse of gifts real or supposed, as in other things. The flesh is never a gift of God. I cannot think that to strengthen the sense of individual responsibility is to open a door to the flesh.

These gifts placed in the church as a whole, in the body of Christ, become joints and bands; and it is in the church, in the body, that they are placed. A gift is a gift in the body, and for the whole body; as a member of the human body acts for the whole: my eye sees for my whole body; my foot steps for my whole body. To give them a charge over that which is not the body is to dislocate them. They may, indeed, be exercised in a given locality, but as the expression of the grace and of the claims of Christ; and this grace and these claims of Christ extend to all the body. Let us remember that they are never to be used by the will of man; where his will comes in, sin enters. This may happen, as may any other sin; but, as in the case of any other sin, it becomes the subject of discipline. We see this in the abuse of the gift of tongues at Corinth. On the other hand, the narrow spirit of man is often corrected by the inalienable and universal rights of the Spirit of God, Supreme and One in all the body. No human arrangement can supersede His claims; but He, as we have seen, has the right to direct the exercise of each individual gift. He it is Who exercises the government of God in the church.

There are other very precious practical passages, besides the two we have been considering, which take up the subject of ministry in its highest connection, with the glory of Christ and of God; we desire not to omit them.

The first of these passages, Rom. 12, enjoins particularly the modesty which leads the servant of God to confine himself to the assiduous and faithful employment of the gift committed to him. The second requires that if any man speak, he should speak as from God, in order that God may be glorified.

“Let each one,” says the apostle, “think soberly” of himself (how truly gracious and good; how encouraging to the heart; and, at the same time, how wholesome is the word of God). Let each one “think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” “Having them 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; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation.” Hence we may also remark that we find not only special gifts, as joints, in the body, but, generally, the humble and faithful use of the talent confided to the servant: a talent with which he trades, according to his responsibility towards the Master, from Whom he had received it.

In the First Epistle of Peter, 4:10, there is the same responsibility operating in love towards others. “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.” I know that many fear such a principle; but that does not change the truth; if anyone does not speak to me as announcing the truth of God, I do not know why he speaks to me at all, Moreover, this is what the apostle says; not “according to” the word of God, as some translate, but “as” His oracles, as announcing the word of God. This is what every man does who preaches the gospel; he has no

doubt of the certainty of what he says: otherwise he ought not to teach.

This responsibility would often prevent a man from speaking, when he is not taught of God; and if, as among the Bereans, even what an apostle says is judged by the word, there is no danger. It is not a question of new revelations, nor that the things spoken should be received without examination: but that the speaker should have the assurance that he is giving utterance to the mind of God, and not merely to his own thoughts. If any one undertakes to teach me, and I ask, “Are you sure that this comes from God, that it is the truth of God, and that God would have you teach it to me?” and he answers me that he is not sure of it, what confidence can I have in him? Yet supposing that he replies he is sure, I have still to examine it by the word. The more we place him who teaches under such a responsibility, the more solemnity and sobriety will there be in his teaching; and where there is love, and real gift, he will not shrink from this responsibility. If he does, let him reflect upon the parable of the servant who buried his talent. If he has not sufficient love to trade, because of its responsibility, he is exactly in the position of the wicked servant; he is not acting according to grace. We are thus reminded of the great principle: direct responsibility to Christ, by Whom the talent has been entrusted to us; a responsibility from which no earthly relationship can disengage us. The claims of Christ and His judgment are ever there.

Responsibility, power, liberty, according to the Spirit, and the restraint of the flesh, these are the main principles of the Christian walk in this matter; a walk of which love will ever be the spring, the moving principle, and the aim. A service which is rendered to Christ, in independence of man, without which responsibility to Christ would be made void; it acts on, the unity of the whole body: otherwise the unity of the One Spirit is denied. Such is the order that the Spirit alone can produce, because He alone can put man out of sight, and subject his will by communicating a liberty which is not the liberty of self, but of the Spirit of God; a liberty which ever recognizes with joy, and as its blessedness, the authority of the Lord and entire submission to His will; a liberty which exists only to serve Him, and considers independence as the miserable pride of sin.

He that speaks of the rights of man, whether of an individual or of mankind, only speaks of sin. He that does not acknowledge the rights of the Holy Spirit resists the sovereignty of God, Who, by means of these gifts, exalts that same Jesus Who once visited this earth in humiliation. The church—the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost Himself on earth—this is the grand truth of ministry, and of the glory of Christ, and of His service upon this earth. The presence of God gives joy, liberty, responsibility, and solemnity. Man, in the presence of God, is set aside as to his vanity and pride, and in his service and fidelity strengthened.

IV. CONCLUSION.

Such is the source, power, and order of ministry, as set before us in the word of God.

Essential to Christianity (because Christianity, in accordance with the active energy of the love of God, seeks that which was lost, testifying to the work and to the victory of Jesus, the way of salvation to the lost), this ministry of Jesus, Who alone is worthy to be thus glorified, receives all its power from, and has its only source in, the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It is the ministry of the Holy Ghost in the choice and employment of His servants. In all this God is sovereign. The exercise of the gifts bestowed by Him is regulated by the Holy Spirit, Who is supreme in the church. The proofs and examples of this are found in the word. As a source of ministry, or as

authority for its exercise, man interferes only to sin.

It will be seen that I have not touched the question of local charges, as not exactly entering into my present subject. It is evident that the apostle Paul, and those delegated by him, established, according to his direction, several elders in the churches which he had gathered, and that servants or deacons of the assemblies, and even deaconesses, had been, at least in certain cases, appointed for the temporal affairs and necessities which were ministered to by the charity of those female servants. Peter speaks of elders much more vaguely. There is no proof that elders were appointed among the Hebrew converts. It would rather appear that men of gravity and of character acted among them upon their own responsibility; a responsibility laid upon them in this matter by love. In the Epistles to the Corinthians, where details of discipline are given, there is no mention made of elders; the Holy Spirit has, perhaps, permitted this in order that we might have these things directly by the hand of the apostle. It is only, I believe, in the Epistle to the Philippians that we have the expression “with the bishops and deacons.”

The ruin in which the church is found at the present day acts more directly upon the apparent order in this respect than upon ministry itself; because, in this matter, man can more easily come in with exterior arrangements. But we must not confound gifts, and the service flowing from such gifts, with office. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is sufficient for this, as for every other need of the church, provided she take the position in which the Holy Spirit sees her. Love will then suffice for all that God requires, and will make the best improvement of the means of blessing bestowed by Him; and He ever bestows that which is suited to His own glory, and to the real welfare of His believing people.

I see no more real difficulty, as regards authority, than as regards the ministry of the word; because authority in the church is not a place with certain powers, limited by a written law; nor something confided by men, jealous lest the authority they have given should be overstepped through the lust of power, or the ambition of the person to whom it has been entrusted. Authority in the church is always, like the ministry of the word, the power of the Holy Spirit upon the conscience, which, moreover, will not be found wanting. Where it exists, God will enforce, even by chastisements, the authority of His Spirit which He has lodged in a man, if that authority be despised. The discipline of the church also confirms it in certain cases; examples of this may be seen in the Epistles to the Corinthians. If we do but believe in the presence of God in the church, we cannot doubt that He is able to compel respect to Himself, and that in the authority which He has entrusted; to whomsoever it may have been given.

As to the spirit in which this ministry should be executed, I say nothing; for it does not become me to speak of it. An entire self-renunciation (and that goes very far when we know the subtlety of the heart) is the only means of walking with the full blessing which belongs to this happy position of service to God, our brethren, and mankind. We must always remember that if, by the power of God, we are free from all men, and responsible to God alone for the employment of the gift which He has confided to us, it is in order that we may be the servants of all. Let us remember that no one is able to give liberty to himself; and if the love of God has given us liberty, it is in order that by this love in us we may serve one another. He has made us free from self, free from independence, free from our own wills, to act as God acts, as He has acted in Christ; not to please ourselves, but to love and to serve one another.

There is nothing more blessed in this world than ministry in this kind. We shall quickly find how much faith is needed in order thereto, and how much of that holiness which keeps us near to God that we may draw strength from Him. May God teach us to keep near to Him every moment, that we may not in detail be following our own wills, even although, on the whole, we may be seeking to do His.

I would here remark that grace is required in these days to realize, at the same time, the two principles, of brotherhood and the exercise of gifts; because the latter necessarily gives externally an appearance of superiority. The flesh, it is true, may use these gifts to seek an earthly superiority, instead of the love and service of others. The humility which seeks only the good of all makes everything easy. In worship there is an entire equality of position; more holiness may give a nearness to God in which the worship will be more true. What we have to seek is spirituality, this is the principal thing. The priest was in a higher place than the Levite; and all the priests were one, save the high priest; this is our position as worshippers. There was another position, which was very blessed, and where God, as Sovereign, assigned the occupation. This was the position of the Levite. The glory of the Levite was to do that which God gave him to do. A Merarite was not to touch the vessels of the sanctuary, nor a Kohathite the different parts of the tabernacle. The Gershonites and the Merarites had a more extensive charge, more oxen and chariots; but they were not entrusted with such precious things as the Kohathites.

It is thus that the apostle reasons, in reference to gifts, comparing them to the members of the body. All the services, all the gifts, are inferior to worship. In the distribution of gifts, God is sovereign, and puts more external honor upon that which is least honorable. The gifts, which are not set off with so many external adornings, are sometimes the most precious. If we are in a low state spiritually, we shall look at the outward appearance, and thus at those gifts which are more external. The Gershonites and the Merarites will have more importance in our eyes, with their oxen and their chariots. Nearer to the sanctuary we shall discern that the Kohathites, who carry the vessels on their shoulders, are as much honored, or even more than the others. At all events, each will be esteemed happy, in proportion as he shall have accomplished the task that God has given him to do. In the fourth chapter to the Ephesians we see, in the first place, that which is common to all: that which is special to each comes after; and these latter things are only to accomplish the former. Let not brotherhood displace gifts, but let gifts subserve brotherhood. The sense of the presence of God will keep everything in its place. The same Lord has said, “All ye are brethren,” and “strengthen thy brethren.” In order truly to strengthen them, some painful experience of self will always be necessary, as in the case of Peter. It is not thus that man would have appointed, but God has so ordered. To deny the Savior, with Whom he had companied three or four years; to destroy, if he had been able, His name from the face of the earth—such, as regards worthiness in us, is the preparation through which God causes us to pass, when He is pleased to put us forward in His service. Perhaps, in addition to this, a thorn in the flesh, because the other is insufficient; for what are we, and who is sufficient for these things?

May God Himself direct His church according to her need, according to the love, and to the riches of grace, which are in Jesus, by the Holy Spirit Who dwells in her. J. N. D.

Chapter 108

Miracles and Infidelity: Part 5

The Scriptures—and in spite of infidels, Christians believe them—are plain as to the ministration of angels: “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?” As regards the wickedness of man they do believe in the fall of man, they do not believe that God made the world as it is morally. They see man degraded in abominable idolatries where Christianity has nothing to do with it, where in the highest state of civilization they worshipped and do worship objects that mark the lowest possible degradation, and indulge, even the wild Indians, in the careful practice of nameless degradation themselves; they know that, in the center of modern civilization, man let loose and boastingly casting off Christianity and God, indulges in horrors too horrible to repeat. They know that where there are not such outbreaks, and where there is a great profession of religion, sin and vileness prevail and scarce hide their face; and they do not believe that God made the world in this state, they leave that to infidels. They believe, knowing God to be holy and good, that man is a fallen being. The state is a fact. Men will excuse its violence as rising up against oppression: there is a measure of truth as to certain parts of this, but they are only deeper in the mire. Where did the intolerable oppression come from? and is violence, glutting in blood and debauchery, the only remedy they have? Further, God's remedy they reject, and are helping people to reject, to their own destruction.

Kuenen is referred to in Supernatural Religion as a very able book. With sufficient contradiction to make their judgment of little worth, all these rationalists are in substance on the same ground. The Pentateuch is not a really historical book at all, but a compilation from a few old documents partly made in the time of Judges, partly in David's or Solomon's reign, partly after the exile! There, at any rate, it received its priestly form! Every divine element is completely excluded, of course therefore no prophecy. Hence, when events later than the professed date of the writing was found, it was written after these events. Jahve was the national god, but Monotheism was only that into which they gradually grew up (through a Semitic tendency)! Some think Jahve (Jehovah) a Canaanitish god; at any rate it was one party, and a small one, who held to his exclusive worship; other gods being equally recognized, even in the Pentateuch, and by the best kings! One party would have fellowship with the Canaanites; another drive them wholly out. I may mention two cases as specimens of their systems. As it is rejected as historically true, and what professes to be of Moses invented or legends, they try and compose a system, patting things together by the probabilities drawn from man's motives, rejecting all thought of any revelation of God—of course all prophecy and any mind of God in the matter. The whole is put together and compiled finally after the exile, with the object of exalting the priests and the authority of Jahve!

But I must now give in my specimens: Abimelech was disposed to unite Canaanites and followers of Jahve, and did get power thus. Gaal was a Jahvist, according to the system. Gen. 49 was written in the time of the Judges! But what is to be made of vers. 5-7, the judgment on Simeon and Levi? According to them, the then state of Simeon and Levi led the poet of xlix. to pat into Jacob's mouth this judgment of the tribes. That comes, says Dr. Oort, from Gen. 34, written at that time, “for we know of no other inducement for the invention of this story than the covenant made

between the cities of Shechem." But it is not certain that we should know the inducement, says Kuenen, and Gen. 34 was written long after. Oort himself had a difficulty—the statement in the 13th verse, that they dealt deceitfully. But this is easily met: it is interpolated. No, says Kuenen; it is a confused reminiscence of the time of the Judges, long after Gideon and Abimelech! It is well that those interested should know the principles of Dr. Kuenen, so lauded by the author of Supernatural Religion.

At the beginning of K.'s book, speaking of the standpoint of his history, he tells us it is one of a number of monographs of the principal religions. The idea of including the Israelitish and the Christian among the principal religions deserves approbation and applause, only if there exist no difference between these two and all the other forms of religions. The idea of a special divine revelation, he says, would place too deep a gulf between them and others to count these among them; and at the end he adopts the statement of Mr. Reville, that, if liberal Judaism prevails (for they have their rationalists), it will closely approach liberal Christianity, which, by its openly avowed Unitarianism, will not excite the same repugnance as orthodoxy. A fusion is hardly probable; but if all religious sects laid down their weapons, religions sentiment would only gain by it. Of course, if a man believes nothing, though there are principal religions, there is nothing to fight for. Divine revelation does not exist; and then, whether Gen. 34 be an existing fiction of the time of Abimelech, or a much later writing of confused reminiscences of that time, is very little matter, and may be left to Drs. Oort and Kuenen who would hail a fusion of Judaism and Christianity, on the ground of there being nothing divine in either.

The other specimen I would cite is, that the prediction of Gen. 49:16, 17, is a clear proof that the chapter was written in the time of the Judges, more precisely of Samson; for then Dan rose up with some vigor! Such are the speculations we are to have, instead of the word of God publicly accredited by the Lord Jesus and the apostles. These are merely instances that occur to me, or rest in my memory.

The whole system is composed of such. I have entered into it elsewhere. I have read Kuenen, Ewald, Bleek, Graf, and looked at others. But, as I said, they are—though the one upsetting the other in detail so as to destroy their proofs—just the same in substance.

Supernatural Religion is a catalog raisonnee of all the infidel German books; an advocate's special pleading against revelation. But while I avow I have not read the half of those he quotes, I cannot say he is fair in those I am acquainted with. I do not charge the author with false quotation, but with leading the reader to the opposite conclusion, for what he quotes, to that the quoted book would, if the context be read.

I quite agree with Dr. Trench that possession means possession; the case of Legion leaves no manner of doubt. But, whatever Mede and others may say, these cases are expressly distinguished from lunacy, as Matt. 4:24; and not only the Evangelists speak of devils coming out, but the Lord expressly desires them to come out. And the case of Legion seems given expressly to show it is really so, as one of the "Fathers" remarks. Even now, with all their boastings, in cases of epilepsy the doctors on postmortem examinations fail generally to find any adequate trace of disease. Scientific men have to learn that they are not all the world, and Christians who are afraid through their pretensions, and yield to semi-rationalism, are the most contemptible of all writers. Milman says our Lord adopted the current language of the day because unbelief in spiritual

agency was one of the characteristic tenets of the unpopular sect of the Sadducees; as if the Lord Jesus would maintain as a truth in the minds of the people a false doctrine on a most important point where the Sadducees were right, for fear of losing His popularity by identifying Himself with them by speaking the truth! Why should He even have said anything and not merely heal the sick person? It is next door to a blasphemy. Meyer says all the efforts to explain away the history of Legion are useless. Either you must take it as a true history, or recognize legendary parts and separate them, and take the story of the swine as the reminiscence of some mishap. He is as unbelieving on these points as the rationalists could wish. Lange's explanation, which Canon Farrar has borrowed, Meyer treats with the contempt it deserves. The existence of good spirits and bad, the very dread expressed by them of judgment as yet “before the time,” and the operation of divine power in miracles, is too interwoven with the whole structure of the Gospels to take them out without destroying its whole texture. I have already remarked that the allegation that the superstition of the Jews accounts for it, proves only the folly of the reasoner who makes it, for they were not believed in by the Jews at all.

That there are many inexplicable facts, false miracles also, and wonders done by evil power is recognized in scripture; but we are tested in such cases by them; they would deceive, we read, if it were possible, the very elect, and the power of spiritual discrimination, or the want of it, is shown; and all that the author of Supernatural Religion does is to confound them all together, showing his own incapacity to discern. Real miracles such as those of the Old Testament are not at all the same as in the New Testament. Divine power was of course shown, and in grace to a people owned of God to found or guard a testimony; but the whole scene of the Lord's ministry was the expression of power in goodness in a living person there, or in a still mightier testimony to His name and redemption when He was gone.

But I ought to state why I account the statements of Supernatural Religion to be unfair. I just remark that the statement as to the book of Enoch, though very common, is entirely unfounded. The doctrine of Jade and that of this book are quite different as to the passage alleged to be borrowed. I do not call this unfair; it is too common. There was a tradition probably as to this prophecy, and the author of the book of Enoch uses it for his own objects; and in Jude the Holy Ghost gives it us, according to the truth of it. It is to me pretty clear that the book of Enoch was written by a great partisan of the Jews, and enemy of Christians, and not long after the destruction of Jerusalem. He sees up to the destruction of his tower, but then can see no farther, but is full of all promises to those faithful to Judaism. Enoch, 88:22, 23, refers pretty clearly to the destruction of the temple by the Romans, and he could not perceive whether they afterward entered the house; in 92 we have the final judgment. Lawrence gives the passage in question thus from Enoch, “Behold He cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon them, and to destroy the wicked, and reprove all the carnal for everything which the sinful and ungodly have done and committed against Him”

Now there is in Jude a prophecy in general analogous; but copied it is not. In the book of Enoch the saints are judged, and the wicked destroyed. Judgment on the saints is unknown to Jude. It is the doctrine of the book of Enoch, because he holds the Jews to be God's people. He says just before, “while judgment shall come upon all the righteous;” executing judgment on the preserved is the doctrine taught. Now it is the judgment of the wicked in Jude; nor is there anything of the speaking of ungodly sinners in the book of Enoch. Both the words and doctrine are different; nor is

there the least proof that the book was before Jude. My own conviction is that the book of Enoch was written after the destruction of Jerusalem—I suppose, in that case, after Jude's Epistle. The idea that the prophecy was current before both is fair enough, but for copying there is no ground whatever. There are many passages in the book of Enoch which would lead us to suppose they were taken from the New Testament—doubtless some merely proverbial sayings used by both. Both the chronological elements and the contents of the book lead, on the closest scrutiny, to the supposition that the book was written by a Jew, who was obliged to admit the judgment of his saints, those faithful to Judaism, and treated the Christians as a perverse set. He had picked up a good many truths which a Jew could own, and wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, but sought to make the Jews still believe in the accomplishment of the promises made to the nation. It is curious as exhibiting a picture of the current notions of that day. He puts the Christ as existing before the creation, but hidden; calls him Son of man, but this is in the Old Testament; he makes the flood come from the world getting a tilt. I do not then speak of this as unfair. It is second-hand and superficial, but it is a current notion, only it has no foundation. But there is what I consider unfair. The author—as he does in countless other instances, stating as proved and certain, because the infidel clique he belongs to have so settled it, what is far removed from being so—tells us, “It has been demonstrated that Ignatius was not sent to Rome at all, but suffered martyrdom in Antioch itself on the 20th December 115.” He quotes then Bleek as witness of this statement. Now Bleek adopts the date, which had been greatly disputed, but in these words (Clark's Eng. Trans. 1:158), “Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who was martyred at Rome under Trajan A.D. 115.” In the same place (Sup. Reliq. i. 268-9), we find “there are no less than three martyrologies of Ignatius, giving an account of the martyr's journey from Antioch to Rome “; but they are all recognized to be mere idle legends, of whose existence we do not hear till a very late period. In fact, the whole of the Ignatian literature is a mass of falsification and “fraud.”

The author quotes Milman ii. 101. Milman says nothing about it there. He does reject the Acts of Martyrdom, but expressly declares that he was sent to Rome, and (102) gives a summary of his journey to Rome as we have it in Ecclesiastical History, and quotes Cureton's epistles as of authority, and fully receives the account of his journey and seeing the brethren on his way, using it as proof there was no general persecution. The author quotes also Ewald vii. 314. Now Ewald does reject entirely the three martyrologies published by Dressel. But be not only holds the whole history itself to be true, and the author's statements wholly wrong, receiving Cureton's Ignatian epistles, but discusses it at length, and considers that the Syrian epistles have lost some passages which have been found in the Greek. As to Polycarp's epistle, he not only receives it, but says, appealing to Ireneeus' (iii. 3, 4, a e) quotation of it, that its originating with Polycarp people in our time have doubted and even denied, but they were utterly wrong. “Es ist die grosste Ungerechtigkeit.” That a mass of infidel Germans (no two of whom have the same theory, and make systems at pleasure, refuting one another, agreeing only to doubt what is true), may be cited, or Davidson, who does nothing but copy from them, no one need deny. But this seems to me very superficial, as well as unfair, in cases I have quoted. There is no original research into the questions, nor even care or fairness in quoting what is quoted in the cases referred to. A vast number I have not examined. That many German infidels sustain the author in many things he says, I have no doubt of.

Chapter 109

Miracles and Infidelity: Part 6

As regards Justin Martyr, with all his details the author seems very weak; and here also all is either borrowed or is only on the surface. That there were a multitude of accounts of Jesus current, written and unwritten, is notorious, and it is stated in Luke's Gospel; that Justin, who was of Palestine, had heard and refers to such is most probable. But these accounts never stood on the ground the four Gospels did. Origen notices (be his remark solid or not is alike as to this) that the others “had taken in hand,” which was merely human, not as Luke. Irenaeus insists that there could not be more than four Gospels, of which I will speak further on, and Tatian made a harmony of these four—plain proof that in the very earliest ages these four were distinctly recognized. That Justin, who was of Palestine, was familiar with the accounts current as published there, and reproduces them, is most probable; but no one can read even what is cited by the author of Supernatural Religion without seeing that Justin was fully acquainted with and recalls what he had read in the canonical Gospels. He does not take the roll down to copy it; but we could not have what Justin gives without our Gospels.

As to the Gospel to the Hebrews, it can hardly be doubted that Matthew wrote some account of Christ in Hebrew: at any rate early Fathers so state. But, after all, their statements are very vague as to what it was. And Epiphanius says it was corrupted, Jerome that he translated it, but this would prove it was not the canonical Matthew. What did he translate? It does not affect our Gospel, which is clearly original, as even the language proves. Jerome says he saw it at Caesarea and translated it, so that there was such in the fourth century. Still the statements of Jerome are so inconsistent that it is hard to draw any clear conclusion from what he says. He says he translated it, and that it was practically the same as Matthew. This it certainly was not by his own testimony elsewhere. The writers of Introductions, Bleek, DeWette, etc., say he gave up afterward this thought, and I suppose did not like saying plainly he had been wrong; but it seems to me the dates do not bear this out. I do not think he is much to be trusted in the matter.

Papias—a man “σφοδρ■ μικρ■ς νο■ν” —assumes there was such a Hebrew Gospel by Matthew; but there were afterward seemingly two differing editions. A few of the “Fathers” accepted it; but Origen, disposed to receive everything, says every one was free to use it if he thought it genuine, only not as authority. But it was in Aramean, and there is no proof that Justin, a Greek, understood the tongue. He was a Greek, and, though living in Palestine, it was in the Roman town Flavia Neapolis. Further, though he preferred being put to death rather than deny Christ, when, as is said, brought to martyrdom through a jealous philosopher, Crescens, yet he never gave up his philosopher's cloak, was a Platonist, and unsound in fundamental doctrines; and, though we cannot doubt his sincerity, was on the surface of Christianity. At any rate, the gospel to the Hebrews is surrounded critically with the greatest obscurity, with no proof that Justin understood it, or was one of Papias's “every one interpreted as best he could.” All this part of the book comes to nothing.

The inspiration of scripture is known by divine teaching; it asserts its own inspiration formally, more formally, if possible, than the spoken word; but its authority is demonstrated by evidence of every kind, such as no other book in the world possesses. The author quotes the writers of the Banr or Tiibingen school in numbers; which is merely part of a progressive effort, not simply to undermine the authority of the New Testament history, but to do so by the invention of a system already seen through and refuted as alike historically unfounded and absurd, and which has now not merely lost its weight outside a few partisans, but has demonstrated the animus of the inventors and their untrustworthiness in every respect. It is this school that the author of Supernatural Religion relies on. We have seen that his quotations from others, themselves rationalist enough, cannot in fact be trusted. There has been little real research into the character of the Gospels.

The Fathers say Matthew wrote in order—chronologically in fact. Mark, on the contrary, no one knew how (supposed as if he heard from Peter! this from the foolish notion that an apostle must be the author, from not really believing in inspiration). Now it is exactly the contrary; Matthew's Gospel brings forth Christ as Messiah, Immanuel sent to the Jews, but rejected of them (the kingdom of heaven and the church and the kingdom in glory being substituted for the present establishment of Messiah's glory); and gives a perfect moral order of subjects with this view. Hence, too, you have in fact no proper history with chronological sequence. This is given in one single verse (iv. 23); and we have His service in Galilee, and at the very end no ascension, but the whole closed with the remnant in Galilee and their mission to the Gentiles. In all the three Gospels blind Bartimaeus at Jericho begins the last events. There Christ is Son of David. Mark and Luke are chronological, and relate events in the same order, as far as they are the same, up to the middle of Luke 9, which terminates the history of Luke (save always the last events). See Luke 9:51. From that verse to 18:34, it is in general His last journey up to Jerusalem, introducing various discourses by the way, and adding others to the same purpose, without note of time. In general, Luke will give a quantity of events together, and develop facts which have a strong moral bearing.

The difference of the Gospel of John is essentially this: it gives not a history at all, but Christ as God the word made flesh, the Jews being rejected altogether early in the first chapter, and so treated all through. The three first chapters are preface before His public ministry, John being not yet cast into prison—the two first going together, and the third, the foundation principles of the new thing, being born again, and the cross. The fourth is Judaea left, and the transition to the worship of the Father; the fifth, life-giving power, and exclusive judicial authority of the Son of God as Son of Man; the sixth, self-emptied and suffering Son of man; the seventh, glorified Son of man giving the Holy Ghost instead of appearing to the world; the eighth, His word rejected; the ninth, His work; the tenth, He has His sheep at any rate (for John all through goes on the ground of electing grace), also the Gentile ones; the eleventh and twelfth, He is testified to of God as thus rejected, as Son of God, Son of David, and Son of Man. But to take up this He must die—episode of Bethany. In the thirteenth, He begins with what refers to His departure out of this world. These rationalists find the resurrection of Lazarus out of place, not having the most distant thought of the mind of God in scripture, nor any idea, of course, that there is such a thing in Scripture.

To return to Justin Martyr, the author's account of his quotations is not at all trustworthy, and all that really bears on the true character of Justin's citation is left out. In the first place, Justin's manner of quoting is practically that of all the Fathers. They habitually quote not verbally, and put two passages together if it meets their point, just as Justin does constantly. Secondly, Justin also

quotes very largely indeed from the Old Testament, which there is no question he received as proper scripture, exactly in the same way as he does from the New. He writes as a philosopher to the Gentiles, and habitually quotes the Christian writings, as authority would have been useless. He calls the Gospels “memoirs” (a term borrowed probably from Xenophon's account of Socrates, showing the tone of his mind), the Gospels written by the apostles and their companions, and says they were read in the Christian assemblies. He quotes them as such expressly—seven times, we are told by those who have exactly examined the details. Five agree with our Gospels; the others have variations; one a transposition of words, probably right; the rest inaccurately recorded with the same sense, and two words added— “and walk” —found nowhere else. He gives the substance as it stood in his mind, the common way of patristic quotation as of our own.

As to the other professed quotation, we find it in others of the earliest Fathers in different words and order; and, just as in Justin, by Fathers who beyond all question recognized the four Gospels and nothing else. That Justin used other traditional accounts, and perhaps the Gospel of the Hebrews, is very likely. There is no question that the four Gospels were held to be of paramount authority at that date. Tatian's harmony of the four was made only some twenty years after; and Jerome recounts the same of Theophilus a few years still earlier. When the author of Sup. Rel. says that competent critics agree, it only means that the infidel Tubingen school do so. Take not only Westcott, who may be thought a prejudiced churchman, but Bleek's Introduction (a theologian sober-minded and candid but as freethinking as any rationalist could desire), and the statements, alleged in Supernatural Religion to be quite certain, are treated as certainly false. The system followed by the author is a mere and evident effort to get rid of the large and developed testimony given with so much fullness in Justin to the Christian Gospels. Citations, says Bleek, are for the greater part unquestionably taken from our present Gospels.

Few, as I have said, in words say that it is written in the memoirs, but he quotes them as they were in his mind with a reference to other current statements, as to those found in other writings of the Fathers. The allegation which refers them to one given writing or to heretical sources has no foundation, though the doctrines and position of Justin would give no guarantee for his own soundness. He was doubtless a Christian, but still a Platonist philosopher. It seems another philosopher got him put to death through jealousy. This statement, accompanied by a reference to Bleek in p. 289, contradicts all Bleek's teaching (as does 293), and is as careless as it is unfounded. As to inspiration, indeed none of them believe it; but as to the repute and esteem in which our four Gospels were held in Justin's days, Bleek is as clear and decided as possible, and as to the use of them by Justin Martyr, among others. See with other places section 261-2. That infidel Germans have disputed over it, as in p. 288, is perfectly true, seeking by all means to undermine the scriptures and contradict the testimonies which support their authenticity.

The whole of this part of the book is full of statements which are unfounded. It is not my part to go into it in detail here. When he says (215) that the first and second Epistles of Clement have a canonical position, it is merely trifling with the fact of their being in God. Alex. There are three hymns there also. He himself says the second Epistle was rejected, as every one who has inquired knows. In Justin's reference to the Lord's baptism, instead of all being referred to the apostle's memoirs, he carefully distinguishes what is in them, which is found in fact in our Gospels, the Holy Ghost coming down like a dove, from other things which are not there, but stated by other Fathers. And this is also the case in his second reference to Christ's baptism (Supernatural

Religion, p. 317); what follows is special pleading.

I have no interest whatever in defending the “Fathers:” one has only to read them, and specially the Apostolic Fathers, to see the difference of inspiration and the unsound and immoral stuff they write. You fall down a precipice from God to man. It is treated as an extraordinary anomaly that Justin could quote as he did if he received the four Gospels. It is a common thing with Fathers. Thus Bleek speaks of this when insisting on Justin's use of the four Gospels (section 87). These variations are of little moment when we remember that the Fathers seldom quoted scripture verbatim or word for word. It is in this place Bleek gives the true account of what the author makes so much about (in 288). He assumes (367) that there were a number of Gospels current— “In how many more” Gospels; but this is falsifying the facts. That there was probably a Gospel according to the Hebrews is not denied; but if there was, it was in Aramean, which, as a rule, not one of the Fathers whose works are in question understood. A mass of apocryphal Gospels we have—one has only to read them to judge of them. Traditions no doubt there were and referred to, but gradually lost. My business is in no way to justify the accuracy of Justin; but the attempt in i. 370 to prove his altering the text is the weakest absurdity.

Such passages are justly quoted by writers on the canon to prove that Justin was acquainted with the Gospels; but to look for the words and to insist that these must be found, and it must be a quotation from some other, is trifling with scripture. If I were to say Jesus condemns a person looking on a woman to lust after her, as much as adultery, people would justly conclude I had read the Gospels; but who, that it was some other apocryphal one? It is just folly.

(Continued from page 5.)

Chapter 110

Miracles and Infidelity: Part 7

In communicating Christ's doctrine to the heathen for their information, it seems to me that Justin's statements are just what we might expect in a philosophical mind like his, proving clearly that he had read and used our Gospels, though occasionally referring to other traditions, as all the Fathers did. If men were to consult him for various readings, it would be the same kind of folly as the author's who is looking for the identical words. Justin is communicating Christ's moral instruction to the heathen, and it is done in the most natural way; his repeating the summing-up and motive is thoroughly so. He spoke thus, He taught thus, He said thus, just show the true character of the citations. The author of Supernatural Religion does not even understand the force of the reasoning. The existence of the Gospel according to the Hebrews is admitted and known, though perhaps seriously altered by certain parties, but it never was in the canon. The possibility of Justin having used it is not generally denied. What is said is that his quotations are sufficient to prove he knew our Gospels. That is a question of judgment on comparing them. The possibility of another Gospel having what is in Justin does not alter this. If it be produced with the whole passage as he has it, and all else is consistent, we shall have another witness. I do not believe it is or can be. Nor have they any hint of the existence of any such thing in all the writings of that day, save the Gospel according to Peter, the supposed reference to which is quite otherwise understood by sober critics, as it is in the only place in which Justin refers to it.

What were the numerous other works in use in the early church? Various accounts were current but were lost, I may say, at once, in the prevalence of the four Gospels recognized as an authority and divine, and so used. And the author must remember that what we have in the written Gospels is the account of what Jesus said, and three witnesses or four alters nothing if they are true. The facts may be called to memory by the Holy Ghost according to Christ's promise, according to the point they were connected with, and a writer quoting it may give it according to the point which is in his mind, and in the connection which the subject he is on suggests. The question, further, is not whether Justin may not have known other current writings or traditions, but whether what he writes furnishes evidence of acquaintance with the Scriptures, particularly with the Gospels, as we have them. We have only to read what he says to be convinced of it, the four canonical being acknowledged thus as such. The way in which the book Sup. Rel. insists on verbal quotation is, for any one who has read Justin or other Fathers, perfectly absurd. Indeed, in the Apologies it is the last thing we should look for; these are addresses sent by a philosopher to the heathen authorities to give an idea of what Christians were and did, to clear them from certain charges, and sometimes appealing, to show the principles they held, to what their Master had said.

Indeed I must say that the discussion on Justin Martyr and other like writers seems to me to be the poorest piece of superficial criticism I ever wearied myself with reading, full of unproved assertions too, the difficulties raised by Fathers and traditions diligently searched out second-hand. The reconciling Papias and Irenmus, and Jerome and others, proved to be difficult, but no serious research after truth at all. It is simply putting into English the infidelity of the Baur school, Schwegler, Hilgenfeld, etc., and nothing else. Of course all inspiration is ignored—bringing up

uncertainties of what may be, to prove what is to be uncertain, and the positive testimonies to mean nothing. What is not spoken of may be true, hence what is said cannot be. The Fathers, as to their judgment, are worth nothing; and tradition as untrustworthy for certainty of details as you please; but they suppose and prove to an intelligent mind certain facts. My faith does not rest on external evidence, but there is a certain kind of pretentious destructive criticism which is profoundly contemptible.

Our critic speaks of many other Gospels, our four thus coming into an uncertain mass. But no one can examine the facts without knowing that these four were, from the earliest days, recognized as distinct. But which are these many? He speaks of the Egyptian, the Gospel according to Peter, the Ethiopian; and all depends upon this kind of thing. But these—unless the Gospel of Peter once mentioned in a phrase of disputed meaning—are all the same, if we can trust various patristic accounts. Adapting an account, say the Gospel according to the Hebrews, to the Ethiopians was very natural; but it is not another, and says nothing about the recognition of the four which were not counted with them, nor does it alter anything. The Gospel according to the Hebrews, and the Ethiopians was not in Greek, so that reasoning from quotations is utterly without force; but it serves a turn. I must add that I do not think an honest man, knowing our Gospels, could read the passage in Justin through, and hesitate one moment as to his acquaintance with them. It is a long discourse, in which he brings forward, to satisfy the heathen, the various teachings of Christ as they stood in his mind from the Gospels, to clear the Christians from the false notions held of them, quoting as I might quote scripture myself, sometimes verbally exact, sometimes the sense, and bringing in passages from another place which gave the connected thoughts which were in his mind for the heathen. There is one passage, “and walk,” not accounted for, in reference to the cross, and not a whit more accounted for by the infidel writers. For their view of Justin's quotations there is not the least ground whatever. In one place the author of Sup. Rel., to make it easy to think that he used a Hebrew Gospel or other Jewish traditions, says he was a Jewish Christian; whereas he states himself, as was the ease, that he was a heathen, and after trying Stoicism, Peripateticism, Pythagoreanism, and Platonism, found rest in Christianity; visited many Grecian cities, and afterward went to Rome. The best thing the reader can do is to read the passage chiefly referred to (in my copy of Justin, Col. 1686, pp. 61-66, about a tenth of the whole Apology from the beginning).

As to the apocryphal Gospels which remain to us, of which there are several, their contents speak for themselves; a proof of the total want of spiritual discernment in the primitive church, and also how impossible it was for an age, which concocted and more or less valued such stuff, to have produced anything in the least resembling our Gospels. In this sense they afford the strongest proofs of the inspiration of the others. The Epistles according to the Hebrews, of Peter, to the Egyptians, are not extant, and so afford a fine field for rational criticism, the connection of which with Justin I have spoken of. In Bleek's Introduction, sec. 118, and also, 87, 88, the reader will find the whole system fully judged. Bleck is a rationalistic critic. Perhaps it may be well to quote his words (Clark's Translation, Sec. 119, i. 335): But with regard to the memoirs of the apostles, so repeatedly cited by Justin, it is at once quite clear that these were not some single treatise, but a collection of writings differing from one another, and usually called Gospels.” Now, since he expressly attributes these writings to the apostles and their coadjutors, we are directly led to conclude that they were the canonical Gospels we have, which ecclesiastical traditions and their

very titles assign partly to the apostles and partly to their fellow-laborers and disciples. The citations made from the memoirs are, at any rate as to the greater part, unquestionably taken from our present Gospels: only, like most of the Fathers, and according to his own practice in Old Testament passages, Justin uses greater freedom in quoting, and mixes together the text of different Gospels, especially Matthew and Luke. He describes them as written by the apostles and their companions. The supposition of some modern scholars that what Justin refers to and makes use of was some one distinct work is clearly false. Again: “His own words (Justin's) explicitly declare that they were more than one, and the citations themselves witness that all our four canonical Gospels were included” (Sec. 87, p. 242).

De Wette says (sec. 74, p. 124) of the Gospel to the Hebrews: “This is the oldest (of the uncanonical Gospels), but its use is traceable no further back than Hegesippus (about A.D. 160), nor beyond the circle of the Jewish Christians; for the orthodox Fathers, far from placing it on a par with the canonical Gospels, reckon it among the ungenuine.” And (76, 125) as to the current acceptance of the four Gospels; “Various countries and parties in the church also furnish testimonies which run back nearly to the Apostolic age.” Again, as to the Gospel to the Hebrews he says, “But the oldest accounts contradict the idea of its being an original and independent work by representing it as apocrypha], and as wavering between Matthew and Luke” (sec. 63, p. 88). One of the alterations indicates a Greek original. Hence the opinion that the Gospel to the Hebrews is the most ancient Gospel writing falls to the ground (sec. 65, p. 93).

Justin mentions, as the source of these sayings and accounts, writings left behind by the apostles and their assistants, which he calls memoirs of the apostles, also Gospels. The old opinion that they mean our canonical Gospels is by no means contradicted by the inexactness of the citations; for it is probable, nay it is established by the repetitions that occur, that parties cited the Gospels, as sometimes the Old Testament writers, freely from memory and Gospels which were read in the assemblies of the Christians cannot well be other than our canonical Gospels, all of which (Mark and John more seldom) he made use of (comp. s. 56, p. 94).

De Wette enters into the objections which I have already gone over; but I do not go farther into them, Those whom I have now quoted are in the fullest sense rationalist writers, but sober and serious men, who weighed facts instead of indulging in inflated and foundationless speculations, where there is no trace of a search after truth, but merely the effort of an advocate to prove his point.

(Continued from page 19.)

Chapter 111

Miracles and Infidelity: Part 8

(Continued from page 35.)

It is perhaps well to remark that the Gospel according to the Hebrews indulged in the grossest form of Jewish mysticism. We read, “The Savior said, My mother the Holy Ghost took me by one of my hairs and carried me to the great mountain Tabor,” and much more (Gfrorer, Tahr. der Heils. Stuttgart, 1838, pp. 332 ff.). This is quoted by Origen, only saying, “if any one received it,” in Jeremiah Hons. 15:4. He elsewhere definitely declares the church had only four Gospels, the heretics many. Jerome quotes it, on Micah, lib. ii. cap. vii. vol. vi. 521, Ed. Vall., where he states he had just translated it, so that it was not a mere Ebionitish addition. So in Comm. Isa. 11 Vail. iv. 156.-Juxta Evangeliarri quod Hebraeo sermone inscriptum legunt Nazaraei. But it came to pass that when the Lord went up out of the water, the whole fountain of the Holy Ghost descended and rested upon Him, and said to Him, My Son in all the prophets I expected Thee, that Thou shouldest come and I should rest on Thee, for Thou art my rest, Thou art my first-born Son, Who reignest forever.

So iv. 485. He quotes the strange phrase, “My mother the Holy Ghost took me by a hair,” etc., from the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which the Nazarenes read, adding that no one ought to be offended, as spirit is feminine in Hebrew, masculine in Latin, neuter in Greek, that, thus being of the three genders in the three principal languages respectively, we might know that what is different is of none, going pretty far in owning the work. Origen excuses it also (De la Rue, iv. 69), but on the plea that as Christ called those who did His Father's will, brother, and sister, and mother, so we might call the Spirit His mother. But the passage of Jerome on Isa. 11 proves it was a systematic doctrine, and the Gospel probably heretical, on the system of Simon Magus and Helen. Yet Jerome translates it and says, many call it the authentic Matthew. This, it is said, was in A.D. 398. Later still, A.D. 415, he says it was in the library of Caesarea (the Nazarenes there using it); the Gospel according to the apostles, or, as many think, according to Matthew (Dialogus iii. contra Pelagianos). He quotes or refers to it very often. A.D. 321 circa, he speaks of it as in the Caesarean library, and composed in Hebrew letters and words. Who translated it into Greek was uncertain (De Viris The Ebionites, he says, used it, joining them and the Nazarenes, where he speaks of lately translating it. But the Nazarene copy he translated. The Ebionites at any rate were divided into two classes, one certainly heretical, as were the Nazarenes or Nazarites. Origen, he says, often used it. Jerome translated it into Greek and Latin; strange if he thought it the same as Matthew, and Matthew translated by we know not whom.

That there were but four Gospels recognized is perfectly clear; Jerome, Irenaeus, Origen, all speak decidedly. Jerome speaks of the others as concocted of the writers without the Spirit and grace of God, that to the Egyptians among them—not naming that according to the Hebrews, but be does that according to the twelve apostles, and this in Dial. 3 contra Pelagianos, he declares to be the same. He then goes on to say that the church has four, which the Lord poured forth as the four rivers of paradise, and four angels and rings, by which, like the ark of the Lord and keeper of

the law of the Lord, she is carried on unmovable bars (liguits); and then speaks of our canonical Gospels, and referring them to the cherubim, connects the four animals there represented with the four Gospels, and declares that only four ought to be received, and the rest as useless fables to dead heretics. (Preface to Matt. 7 p. 1, Vail.) He was somewhat late in date, but Irentis says the same thing. He says, lib. iii. 8, There can be no more than four, nor can there be fewer. There are four regions of the world, and four principal winds, and as the church is spread over all the world it must have four columns, whence it breathes forth life. So He who sits between the cherubim has given us a fourfold Gospel, composed by one Spirit ■νι δ■ πνε■ματι συνεχ■μενον referring, I apprehend, to the τεχν■της Λ■γος ■ συν■χων τ■ π■ντα, and he then enters largely into the four cherubim, saying the Gospels are consonant to those in which Christ is seated. Irenaeus had been showing that the heretics themselves received one kind one Gospel, another another, but in result all four, and were self-condemned by what they did accept; but the church all four, the sure and full pillars of the truth.

I will now cite one or two of the miracles of the apocryphal Gospels, heretical often it may be, and in general mere fables, but often valued by the ‘Fathers.'

Christ was sent to one master, and told him all the letters and their meaning, and the master brought Him back, and said He must have been born before Noah; then to a more learned one, and, the master having raised his hand to beat Him, his hand withered and he died. Then Joseph said to the divine Mary, From this time we will not suffer Him to go out of the house, since every one that opposes Him is struck with death.

There was a rabid boy who, when the fit took him, bit every one, and being in company with the boy Jesus, sought to bite His side, and struck it so that Jesus cried; but Satan fled out of the boy like a mad dog. The boy was Judas Iscariot, and it was that side which was pierced with the lance.

Then He was making figures of animals and birds out of mud. Now, he says, I shall order them to move. Are you, said the boys, the Creator's Son?” But then He ordered them, and they went and came back when He called. At another time at a dyer's He threw all the articles out into the yard; the dyer was in a great way about it, when he returned them piece by piece of the right color. He made all Joseph's work fit exactly.

He went out to play, but the boys left and hid themselves, and when in each house they were denied to be there, He asked, What have you there in the furnace? Three-year-old goats, said the woman; and He said, Come out here to your shepherd, goats; and they came out like goats and leapt around Him, and the women were all terrified, and besought Him; and then he said, Come, boys, and let us play, and immediately they were restored to their proper form.

Then He made ponds and twelve little birds, three of a side, and a Jewish boy, Hananus, it being the sabbath, came up and reproved Him, and destroyed His fish-ponds, but, He clapping His hands on the birds, they flew away piping; and Hananus coming up to destroy the fish ponds of Jesus also, the water disappeared, and He said, as the water disappeared, Your life shall disappear also, and immediately the boy dried up.

I will now take up some of the Gospel miracles, and, first of all, using that of Matthew, as the structure of the Gospel is very evident with a little attention, and the place and character of the miracles through it.

The difference of the three synoptical Gospels and the fourth is this. The first three present Christ as Emmanuel-Messiah, the prophet servant, and Son of man, to men, and, in a narrower sense, to the Jews. Whereas in John this is not the case; it reveals what Christ is in Himself; that the world, when He was revealed in it, did not know Him, though He made it; and that His own rejected Him.

But then He put into the place and privilege of sons those who did receive Him, a new thing, but thus they were born of God, not of the flesh nor of man's will. The Jews are therefore treated all through as reprobate, but He declares that He would have His sheep out from their midst, and others from among the Gentiles; and then the Holy Ghost is spoken of as living on the earth instead of Him, when He was gone as man to the Father.

Now this presentation of Christ in the three first terminates and reaches its climax in the transfiguration, which changed all, for it was as a revelation bringing in a glorified Christ. This divides the first three Gospels into three parts, the history of the Lord up to the transfiguration (His birth, as Mark gives the prophet, being there left out), the continuance of patient mercy up to blind Bartimaeus, with various instructions, chiefly for the coming time; and, from meeting with the blind man, His last presentation as Son of David to the Jews, and the details of His being taken and crucified. Miracles Christ wrought at all times, even to the last days, when He was free in the temple, healing the ear of Malthus at the moment of His capture. Perhaps we may say the greatest of all His living miracles was His giving up His own spirit to His Father on the Cross.

But, in the active life of Jesus, it is the time which closed in the transfiguration, beginning after His temptation in the wilderness, which forms the proper period of His working miracles as a testimony. The goodness expressed itself at all times in them, but that on which it rested (“or else, believe Me, for the very works' sake") was from His victory over Satan, binding the strong man, till the transfiguration revealed a wholly new order of things coming in connected with a rejected Christ, from which time He forbade His disciples to tell men that He was the Messias, saying “the Son of man must suffer,” though still till His hour was come, continuing His work of grace. The general character of the Lord's miracles I have spoken of. The revelation of God in power and goodness that He might be known and trusted by man, and man, wicked as he might be, have confidence in Him. As the beginning of Eve's sin was losing confidence in God's goodness by the guile of Satan, if God did not seek their happiness fully they must seek it for themselves, as even now. Hence will, lust, transgression, so now God was there to give in perfect goodness blessed ground of confidence in Himself; but, I add here, graciously and perfectly suited to the state and need of man. The person who can be insensible to the perfectness of the revelation of God in goodness to man in Christ down here is incapable of feeling what God and goodness is.

But I turn now to look at the miracles recorded in particular as suited to the special testimony given, and first in Matthew. The general testimony is in 4:23. “And Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people,” or, as expressed by Peter (Acts 10), “He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him.” Matthew's testimony is to the Lord as Emmanuel and as Jesus, that is, Jehovah the Savior. For He shall save His people from their sins. He was Jehovah; but first of all Jehovah, according to promise to His own people. Hence His genealogy is traced from Abraham, and also David, to whose seed the promises were made; as Paul states it in the Romans, of the seed of David

according to the flesh, a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to perform the promises made to the fathers, as this He was rejected; and then comes in another character and title, proved Son of God with power, according to the “Spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead.” This last, on which Christianity is really based, is not our subject. The order of the Gospel is this: 4:23, had gathered multitudes around Him. He announces to His disciples, but in the audience of the multitude, the principles of the kingdom, and who were such as could enter, adding reward in heaven itself when suffering for Christ existed. There is nothing of redemption or justification in it. In viii. we have the Lord personally as Jehovah, still as rejected Son of man; in 9 the character of His service down here—grace. x. Mission to the Jews alone, any other forbidden; but from verse 15 carried on after His departure, but still in cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. 11. His ministry as well as John the Baptist's in their midst rejected, but John owned by Him, and He as Son of God revealing the Father and calling the weary to Himself to rest. xii. His utter rejection of and by the pharisaic Jews, and final break in principle with the nation. xiii. He is out of the house, and unfolds the status of the kingdom when the king was rejected. xiv., xv. His mercy as being there still continues in a sovereign way, but the principles of what is brought in anew, both as to dispensational position, trial, and relationship, are unfolded; then pharisaism, man's religion, man's heart and God's laid bare, the great foundation truths of his dealings in Christ. xvi. The church replaces Judaism. xvii. The glory of the kingdom does: only for all this He must die. xviii. Individual and collective directions founded on the new thing. Chs. 19. and 20. to 28. complete these new principles and their consequences. Verse 29 of 20. begins the last events up to the Lord's death and resurrection: only you have no ascension. The remnant are sent out from Galilee to the Gentiles, as we see in the close.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 112

Miracles and Infidelity: Part 9

Now in Matt. 8 we have the person of the Lord as present here. First, He meets the leper. The cleansing of the leper was a simply divine work. On the other hand, not only the leper was put out of the camp, but if any one touched him, he was put out too. Here the leper had seen the exercise of power in the Lord, but was not sure of His willingness, of His love. “If Thou wilt Thou canst.” With divine authority and reassuring love the Lord says,

“I will, be thou clean.” But more, though He were Jehovah who cleansed in love, He had become a man in grace; He touched man, so to speak; not infected or unclean with the uncleanness of men, but healing and cleansing them in grace through faith. “He put forth His hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean.” Impossible to have a more striking testimony of all that the Lord was in this world than this miracle. Next I find the recognition of universal divine authority in a Gentile. Though come amongst the Jews according to promise, God could not be confined to Israel. There was greater faith here than in heartless self-sufficient Jews; “speak with a word,” and all will be done, and so it was. Next, in home mercies, He bears our griefs and carries our sicknesses (not our sins here, though these were the fruit of sin being here). He not only heals with a word divinely, but comes as man in this power to know our sorrows. Still He is the rejected Son of man, not having where to lay His head, but come into the midst of an evil world, God manifest in the flesh. Adherence to and following Him at all cost was the test of righteousness, but following Him led into dangers and difficulties. Calm in the midst of the power of evil, rejected though He might be, He commands creation. All the power of the enemy, moreover, allowed therefore to be manifested, quails and bows before Him, not the less rejected for that; for man, who cannot drive away Satan, gets rid by his will of God even when come in grace. His presence disturbs him too much.

In chapter 9 we have the same divine power in the midst of Israel, but the character of His mission, through His person of course as manifesting God, still shines out. It is grace: He declares to the poor paralytic that his sins are forgiven him; the scribes in their hearts within judge Him as guilty in attributing to Himself what belonged to God only. He replies by exercising the power united to that of forgiving in Jehovah's ways with Israel in Psalm while taking still the place of Son of man. “Who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thy diseases.” Forgiveness and healing, such was His mission if they would receive Him come in grace in the flesh. He proved the announced power and dealings of Jehovah present, but as Son of man by the exhibition of it in that part of what was announced, which was sensible to men in goodness. Then He calls Matthew, not come to call the righteous but sinners. The departure of the present Bridegroom is noticed, and the change from form to power. But then what was passing in Israel? Come to heal what was ready to die, He has in fact to raise the dead, for dead in sins we all are; but whoever by faith touched the hem of His garment was healed even of a disease which no human physician could cure. But blind and dumb were men (Israel), as well as spiritually dead.

We have here, then, miracles which show present healing there for faith which nothing else could afford; we have what was really in its fullness being wrought, raising the dead, the blind eyes

opened, the tongue of the dumb loosed, and also, as ever, the harvest more plentiful than the laborers. Forgiveness and grace, the true character of what He was, were brought in, but showed in acts which manifested in present power what man could feel in his body, as in sorrow and evil down here, what God was, and this as present in goodness in the midst of men. The character of the mission and the character of the miracles are interwoven, and both, the expression of the character of God come down here and dealing in grace with man.

In the sad close of this chapter we see the effect on man's unchanged heart of goodness in power, of this manifestation of God. Rather than receive the Lord they ascribe miracles, which they could not deny, to the power of the devil. But the time for entirely giving them up was not yet come. Divine patience had yet a work to do. The unfaltering love of Jesus continues to seek the poor of the flock, if the Pharisees preferred blasphemy to grace, preaching the gospel, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. For He had compassion on the multitude, weary sheep without a shepherd; and this led to a further manifestation of power and grace. He sends others into the field: the harvest was plentiful; the laborers few. Ever is it so.

In chap. 10 we have not only power in goodness but power to give power; and this is properly divine Their work here is wholly confined to Israel. The mission to the Gentiles was from Christ as risen (28) but by His gift they were to exercise the same power as He did. Here it was seeking the remnant in Israel. If the house was worthy, peace was to rest upon it. The chapter is divided into parts all referring to Israel: their work then, to the end of verse 15; from verse 16 more general and continued, still in Israel, after His death till the Son of man came; but at present they must expect rejection. It is our lot in this world. They were not to fear. Not a sparrow fell to the ground (not merely without God, but) without their Father. For the Son revealed the Father's name; but we have seen this tested men. They could not stand the revelation of God. It brought out the enmity of the human heart against good, and especially against God; and enmity which, stronger than natural ties, wrought most where the relationship was nearest, and where the hated object—for hated, alas! as Christ has proved, it is—is more galling. The disciple is not above his Master; we have to take up our cross and follow Christ. Thus divine power, and its manifestation in goodness, and its rejection, go together as before.

This is fully developed in a solemn commentary on all in chapter 11. The ways and works of the Lord are summed up as testimony to John the Baptist, now in prison, on the question, Art thou He that should come? The blind saw, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised, the souls of the poor were cared for; but blessed was he who was not stumbled at the rejected Son of man—power in goodness and rejection! The Lord gives, not receives, testimony. But the solemn warnings of the Nazarite prophet of the wilderness, and the divine associations of grace with sinners to win them, men alike rejected. And this brought all to a point, the mighty works were in vain. In fact the truth of His person, too glorious for man as he was to receive, and in the perfect submission of Christ to His rejection as come among the Jews—His eternal personal glory, the Son revealing the Father in grace to burdened and needy hearts, taught submission withal by His own, that they might every way have rest—was what was really there, the new thing, and glory in grace shines out through the rejected but obedient Son of man.

The twelfth chapter completes the statement of the position in which Christ is here found, as well as that of the Jews as a body. There are but two particularized miracles referred to in it. The

sabbath was the seal of Jehovah's covenant with Israel. As with the rejected David, so with the rejected Son of David, all things in Israel were made common. A greater than the temple, too, was there; the Son of man was Lord of the Sabbath. Had they understood mercy, as contrasted with mere law, they would not have condemned the guiltless. Under the Son of man's authority as Lord of the sabbath they were guiltless, but in their state of soul the Jews could not understand this. In the synagogue there was a man with a withered hand: convicting them of hypocrisy, well-doing was the manifestation of God and not the legal Sabbath. The old covenant was passing away. He withdraws and heals all that come. Meek and lowly, the time would come for Him to show judgment. He then works the second miracle referred to above, casting out a demon. The people say, Is it not the Son of David? The Pharisees repeat their blasphemy—He casts them out through Beelzebub. Now all was brought to an issue. If it was by the Spirit of God, the kingdom of God was come amongst them: they were openly blaspheming; divine power they could not deny, they were fully condemned, and at the end of their history would come under the full power of Satan. He did not own relationship in nature with Israel down here: those in whom His word wrought were His true relations. His connection with man was through what He brought, not what was in man, though He was a true man.

This closes the proper history of His ministry or service in Israel, though in divine mercy it continued, but with a testimony modified in character. But what His miracles were in testimony is clearly seen, and what they meant and said. His final breach with Israel leads to His going out and announcing the kingdom of heaven, but without the present King (chap. xiii.); full of interest, but not introducing any miracles. It is the first thing presented as taking the place of Messiah then presented on earth.

But in chap. 14 His mercy continues, though in a sovereign and divine way, not as Messiah, Son of man, presented to them. The putting to death of John the Baptist brought actual rejection close to His spirit, a solemn moment, felt deeply by the Lord, so that He retired apart, but the multitude came; yet the feeling for others or the solemnity of the moment never hindered the readiness of divine goodness. He was moved with compassion when He saw the multitudes; He meets it as Jehovah will fully in the last days, according to Psa. 132 He will satisfy her poor with bread. This as a sign He does. He then goes on high to pray—as He now is—the disciples being left to toil their way across the sea without Him, and rejoins them and all is still; and then He is joyfully received where once He had been rejected. But historically He exercises the same divine power in goodness—goodness above all the rejection and heartlessness of men. The hem of His garment made perfectly whole.

Chap. 15 is a very remarkable chapter, but I must touch on it only in connection with the miracle. Their human will-worship, as contrasted with God's law, and really to the temporal advantage of the priests, is utterly rejected: man's religion in alleged offerings to God as contrasted with God's law. Next, man's heart is the source of all the evil. And then with one of the accursed race of Canaan, so that as come to Israel there could be no blessing for her, the reckoning on God's heart in sovereign goodness met at once with a response. He could not deny Himself, or say, God is not as good as you suppose. He was divinely above the barriers of Judaism and dispensation, and divinely good. Again, the miracle is a present witness of what and Who He is. He returns to the field of ministry in the land of Israel, and satisfies yet again the poor with bread in the same divine way. I have no doubt there is an intentional specific difference between these and the 5000, the 12

and the 7. This latter is more specifically divine with the remnant, but it is not here the place to enter into these details of interpretation. The general principle of wonted mercy, verse 30, gives us again His full and constant character.

In chapter 16 we find the church substituted for a Christ present on earth, on the confession of Jesus as Son of the living God, and the keys of the kingdom given to Peter; but no special miracle demands our attention.

In chapter 17 we have the kingdom in glory. This was the Son of man revealed in the glory of the kingdom.

(Continued from page 51.)

(To be continued.)

Chapter 113

Miracles and Infidelity: Part 10

(Concluded from page 67.)

Here we find the disciples themselves unable to use that power in Christ which faith would have done. Only separation of heart and spirit, and reference to and confidence in God, could wield it and set aside the power of Satan down here. This answered, so to speak, to the coming glory of the Son of man, and made Satan powerless in the presence of a humbled Savior. But now, for all that, the new place belonging to the disciples, connected with His resurrection, is strikingly brought out. The coming glory did not belong to Christ's then position (that was the fasting and praying part of His path), and they were not to speak of the vision of glory till He was risen. But meanwhile He shows divine knowledge and divine power over creation. Those who collect the didrachma for the temple ask Peter if his Master was not a faithful Jew. Christ shows His divine knowledge of things in anticipating Peter, but puts Peter in the same place with Himself, “that we offend not.” They were both sons of the great King of the temple, “that we offend not.” Then He shows His power, making the fish bring the needed money, two didrachmas, and Peter was to give it “for Me and thee.” Redemption has brought us into the place of sons with Christ. Grace bowed to the place, but power over all creation showed Who was lowly there; and grace then brought believers into the place of new and infinite blessing in which Christ stood. This blessed “Me and thee” closed, in fact, the path of Christ here with the displayed glory. We have characteristics of the walk suited to this new place of the disciples individually and collectively; but the present testimony to Christ was over: they were charged indeed not to say any more that He was the Christ.

We have one notable miracle in 21. The fig-tree of God's planting, Israel after the flesh, man under the old covenant, when the Lord of the vineyard came seeking fruit, was judged as fruitless forever. This and the manifestation of the truth of Satanic power in the swine are the only miracles which were not the direct exercise of power in goodness. But they not only confirm the constant character of all the others, but show the state of man and God's judgment of that state as to man's responsibility, when all the testimony of grace and power had been given. The story of the didrachmas showed the new place in grace; that of the fig-tree, man's condition under responsibility and law as he was.

In chapter 20:17 to 28 are shown Christ's and the disciples' place here below as finally rejected. Then verse 29 begins His last presentation to Jerusalem as Son of David, and God's testimony to Him by the mouth of babes and sucklings. The mercy indeed continued, but the testimony was closed. He who believed He was Son of David received sight, the rest were judged. The greatest miracles of all were His death, giving up His own Spirit, when He could say, It is finished; and His resurrection. But these were either for stability of faith to believers or for the display of power in others as the subject of their testimony. Our subject has been Christ's own works as a testimony to His person, and the true character of God as so revealed.

For the present I close this paper, already extended far beyond my thought in commencing it. It may be interesting to examine the other Gospels, and study any peculiar aspect of the miracles

connected with them. But for the general principle what we have found in Matthew folly suffices, and gives a character of divine goodness and entering into our sorrows which infidelity cannot touch, and, through the hardening of heart it always produces, cannot feel or see the beauty of. J. N. D.

Mission Sermons

It seems a duty to souls, not to say to the Lord and truth, to give a simple account of this incongruous book. For souls in the Establishment, strongly prejudiced as they are by the antipathies of party feeling, this is difficult.

Our older readers might conceive that the adopted name of Father Ignatius designates the Hon. and Rev. G. Spencer, a Popish pervert, so well known some fifty or more years ago. The present claimant is the Rev. Joseph Leycester Lyne, a comparatively recent Anglican deacon, who poses as a “monk,” and preaches where he can, as an “evangelist,” without license from the English Establishment to which he tenaciously adheres.

From Mr. J. N. Smedley's Introduction to this volume of discourses which he edits, we learn that Mr. Lyne in 1860 “received his call from God to become a monk,” being “an out-and-out ritualist.” Yet we are told in the next page (8.) that only in 1866 did he become “a converted man,” “born again” as he and all intelligent believers would express it.

Now we hail with thankfulness the testimony to Mr.. L.'s conversion in 1866; but what are we to think of his sobriety in adhering, even now, to the astounding assumption (not to say, presumption) of receiving a “call from God to become a monk,” and this six years previously, while still a child of wrath even as others? “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” How absurd then and even profane, for one who owns the unspeakably blessed change of being born anew, to pretend to a call from God! six years before to become a monk! That the enemy deluded an unrenewed man, steeped in ritualism, is not surprising. That he should not now discern and judge the snare ill becomes one born of God. It is His dishonor much more than Mr. Lyne's.

But now a few words as to monachism may be seasonable. In letter and in spirit it is wholly unknown to both the Old Testament and the New; yet it was an old system when our Lord brought in grace and truth. Neither law nor gospel was its parent, but Oriental heathenism, Brahmanic and Buddhist; whence it crept among the Essenes of Palestine and the Therapeutae of Egypt, the immediate progenitors of Paul of Thebes and Anthony among professing Christians, before simple anchorites merged into the cloister-system, τ■ κοιω■βιον, of Pachomius. At first they were all laymen, and many were fathers of families. Indeed it was not till 1311 that the obligation to take orders became law under Pope Clement V. Nor was any vow imposed at first. It was not uncommon for some time to return to ordinary life. Rome, ever alive to adopt any and every element conducive to ecclesiastical dominion, made the status indelible for all who took the vow. Its source was not revelation but that spurious philosophy which saw nothing but evil, as well in the human body, as in matter generally. Devotedness in grace, as taught by our Lord and the apostle, is a wholly different thing.

Yet this heathenish importation into debased Christendom is one of the chief objects for which Father Ignatius lives and labors, on the plea of a divine call which left him unconverted for six

years after. Nay, he now goes farther astray. As he never humbled himself before God for that which he first in unbelief ascribed to Him, he has been allowed to fall into the still more heinous sin of affirming divine “apparitions of late” at his Monastery in Llanthony! There was in Aug. 1880 a vision of the monstrance, or silver vessel containing the host, while it was actually locked up within a massive iron door! The choir-boys in the evening, who knew nothing of this, saw the Virgin Mary! Again, on 4th Sept. following, they saw the bush illuminated once more; and when an “Ave Maria” was sung, instantly the figure flashed in a cloud of light (p. 414), and even “a second figure as of a Man, with only a cloth round his loins,” appeared in the light, stretching out his hands. “The senior boy saw the figure on eight separate occasions” (p. 415). On the 15th Sept. Mr. Lyne, with the boys and some five adults, watched and suggested to sing three “Hail Marys,” in honor of each person of the Trinity. Flashings of light were seen; when he said, “Let us sing a ‘Hail Mary,' in honor of the blessed Virgin herself.” This was indeed effectual, he lets us know. “Directly we began to do so, I saw a great circle of light flash out over the whole heavens, taking in the mountains, the trees, the ruined house, the enclosure, the monastery, the gates, and everything; the light flashed upon our feet, upon the steps, and upon the buildings; and from that one great circle of light, small circles bulged out, and in the center of the circles stood a gigantic figure of a human being, with hands uplifted, standing sideways. In the distance this gigantic figure appeared to be about sixty feet in height; but as it descended, it took the ordinary size of a human being. At the moment it struck me that a dark appearance over the head of the figure was hair, not a veil; but I am convinced, from comparing notes with others, and also from other reasons, that it was a veil which I saw over the face. I saw distinctly the outlines of the features against the bright light, and also the exact form of the drapery from the sleeves of the upraised arms, as clearly and as plainly as it is possible for me to express. It was all stamped with a most marvelous kind of reality upon my mind. But marvelous and glorious as the vision had been, staggered and astonished as I (who am naturally so impulsive, excitable and demonstrative) was at the time, I happily determined to say nothing of what I had seen to those about me; but to ascertain what they had seen, in order that I might receive confirmation from them. So after the vision had passed, I turned to the brother on my left and said, 'Did you see anything?’ ‘Yes, indeed I did, Reverend Father,' he replied. 'Now tell me,' I said, exactly what you saw? ‘He told me precisely what he had seen, and his testimony was precisely confirmatory of what I myself had witnessed. The brother in front of me also declared that he saw exactly what the other had described. A few minutes afterward Sister Janet [who testified to the vision of the past also, p. 409] came in through the meadow, and walking up towards the gate, lifted up her hands, as if she wished to attract our notice and to speak. I went to her and said, ‘What is the matter?’ ‘Oh! Reverend Father,' she replied, I have seen the most glorious vision of any yet.' I told her to be quiet, and to tell me exactly what she had seen. She described precisely, without a word being said by us, what she had witnessed; and it was exactly what had been seen by us. From that time no further visions appeared” (pp. 416-418).

Some of our readers may wonder that such words should be printed in these columns But it may be wholesome to learn how persons confessing Christ's name can be deceived. It is not for us to account for what was seen: whether by an imposture practiced by anyone; or by the deceiving power of Satan. That manifestations, not of man but from beneath, have been, even in our day, cannot be doubted by any candid reader of Mr. R. Baxter's Narrative of Facts as to the Irvingite delusion. Not improbably there may have been a kindred snare laid for this monastic company, not only in the visions, but in the healing. virtues of the leaf “which stood up dark against the dazzling

garments of the Apparition, as it appeared in the bush" (pp. 420-4'25). Father Ignatius regards these phenomena as a sanction from on high to the Restoration of the Reserved Sacrament, and the Cultus (as he veils the worship) of the Mother of our Lord, and so to his own Monastic revival in the Church of England. Those who know that these are essential points of apostate Christendom will not forget the solemn warning "for the last time," that "no lie is of the truth," and that signs confirmatory against the written word are not of God.

Yet Father Ignatius throughout eleven Mission Sermons sets forth Christ as the accessible and immediate Savior to all that believe. There may be egotism and a dangerous trifling with ritualistic trumpery; but his preaching ordinarily savors strongly of a style common enough among so-called Plymouth Brethren and their followers. He is without any full grasp of redemption; he does not understand the righteousness of God; but there is just such an echo of the gospel preached by the minor canons among Brethren as to convey the impression that Mr. Lyne is as decidedly characterized by their evangelizing as by Romanizing in the rest of his religious life. Not only in logic but in faith the two things stand irreconcileably opposed. May he therefore have grace to consider his thoughts and ways, rejecting the evil and cleaving to the good! It is as perilous for his own soul as for his hearers, that he should go on for years blind to the present inconsistency. The gospel of God is intolerant of ritualism, still more of idolatry; and he who preaches Christ ever so feebly ought not to defame the Reformers or excuse their enemies as in his Orr. 17, 18, 19.

Chapter 115

C. H. Spurgeon's Winning Souls for Christ; and Driving Away the Vultures From the Sacrifice

London: Passmore and Alabaster.

It is a pleasure to bring these addresses before Christians who might not otherwise hear of them.

The first is an earnest exhortation delivered to the members and friends of the Open-air Mission, with not a few wise and wholesome counsels for the better promotion of the work.

The second is a sermon on Gen. 15 which gives characteristic expression to the preacher's abhorrence of those whose false teaching would profane or do away with the sacrifice of Christ. “Deprive us,” he cries, “of the sacrifice, and behold an army which has lost both its banners and its weapons of war. The gates of hope are closed against the guilty when the atonement is denied. The windows through which light should come to the penitent are sealed against a single beam of hope when once you take away the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore will we drive away the ravenous birds as long as we have a hand to move. As we love the souls of men, we will spend our last breath in the defense of our Lord's substitution. Can we bear to see man's last refuge taken away? God forbid! Away, ye evil birds. The heroes of old chased the harpies from their feasts, much more would we drive you from the altar of our God.” So would we; and we should only add to the intensity of our action, if we felt as we ought the dishonor the misleaders are rendering to God and to His Son in that infinite work, to which the Holy Ghost bears His witness for the remission of sins. Let us pray for Mr. S.

Chapter 116

Misuse of Order in 1 Corinthians 14:40

One may well be astonished at men quoting 1 Cor. 14:40 for any order which is not that of the chapter, nor of scripture at all. They avail themselves of the authority of God's word for their own order whatever it be, while trampling under foot the only order which divine revelation sanctions, or which was intended to be established for God's assembly.

Chapter 117

Modern Deism

As Mr. Arthur gave us “Religion without God,” in dealing with the Positivism of Comte and the Agnosticism of Herbert Spencer, so he makes Justice Stephen the type of Deism in our day, or “God without Religion.” Those who have to do with either the Atheist or the Deist will do well to provide themselves with these excellent volumes, each of which is the natural complement of the other.

The work before us consists, besides preface and contents (pp. 1-20.), of nine chapters (pp. 1-454). The first. is Sir Jas. S's attitude towards Positivism, Agnosticism, and Christianity. His view of his opponents is not flattering. His own position is expressed in the words, “If human life is in course of being fully described by science, I do not see what materials there are for any religion, or indeed what would be the use of one, or why it is wanted. We can get on very well without one; for, though the view of life which science is offering to us gives us nothing to worship, it gives us an infinite number of things to enjoy.” Of Positivism and Agnosticism he says, “Humanity with a capital H (Mr. Harrison's God) is neither better nor worse fitted to be a God than the Unknowable with a capital U. They are as much alike as six and half a dozen. Each is a barren abstraction, to which any one can attach any meaning he likes.” Mr. Spencer's “whole theory is a castle in the air, uninhabitable and destitute of foundations.” As for Mr. Harrison's “collective power of the human race,” he calls it “a bag of words which means anything, everything, or nothing, just as you choose” (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, 2nd Ed. p. 30.). In the Nineteenth Cent. No. 88, p. 918, he says, “To deny that Christianity in its various forms has been, and still is, one of the greatest powers in the world; or to deny that its leading doctrines have in fact been associated in many ways with all that we commonly recognize as virtue, is like denying the agency of the sun in the physical world.” How strange after such an admission, the terms of which need not be criticized here, to think that life moral and social would go on equally as well, “as far as I can see,” whether there is or is not God as a future state. Sir J. S. is sadly blind. He is not astray however in saying, “Attempts to construct a religion out of science are like attempts to fly without air and without wings,” nor in thinking that what unites and governs men religiously must be based on the Supernatural accepted as true. Faith is in God, as well as bowing to His revelation.

In chapter 2. Mr. A. shows what is involved in the supposition of all religion passing away. But scripture is plain that the Lord will ere long receive His own to Himself, and that the apostasy will come and the man of sin be revealed, and not only Christianity but even Judaism vanish as far as public profession; for God will have hidden ones, and even witnesses suited to that dreadful day. The nearest analogue in the past was the day of Noah's deluge, or (on a smaller scale) of Lot's rescue from Sodom, to which the Lord compares the day when the Son of man will appear. Mr. A. does not exaggerate in his effort to describe its moral horrors, but rather falls short; and Sir J. S.'s supposition is heartless nonsense, and his reasons, given in ch. 3., are poor, as Mr. A. proves conclusively in ch. 4. History is all against Justice S.; how much more is prophecy! For it reveals the Lord in judgment, of which our author has little or nothing to say.

In chapters 5., 6., Mr. A. discusses the question: Does the scientific view of life destroy the foundations of religion? Sir J. S. assumes that this view is the basest form of development, such as Heckel's, which excludes God and denies Him It is unbelieving biology, without question of an immortal soul, or of God either as Savior or as Judge; it is life here in its lowest aspects without a present superior or an everlasting future of heaven or hell, to say nothing of the new relationships of grace. Yet even in the lowest object Darwin confessed “the Creator” as the sole source of life and power, whatever his fanciful theory; and Huxley, that “the present state of our knowledge furnishes us with no link between the living and the not-living.” Spontaneous generation is opposed to all facts. And what of “eternal life”? It is unknown to science; yet without it none can live in God's presence. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life: in Him the believer has and knows them all. Some words Mr. A. cites from Mill's Utilitarianism p. 14 are not unsuitable here: “It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, is of a different opinion, it is because they know only their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.” Infidelity may glorify man and his fancied rights; but where is respect or pity or love? How different is Christ! “This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.” But the natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged or examined. All is vain till a sinner judges himself by God's word and believes in God's Sea. Spiritual life, eternal life, is in Christ for faith, God's free gift through Jesus Christ our Lord. Then too His love constrains us.

Even of human life science knows and has told us indefinitely little; but all life, according to Darwin himself, points to God as the Giver: how much more the life capable of communion with Him! Even as to natural life biology is dumb; it cannot sorely presume to speak of eternal life.

Chapters 7., 8., essay to meet the question whether all religion, and next Christianity, will pass away. Here Mr. A. as ever writes interesting facts, but he does not rise on his own showing above what is “probable.” Why should a believer with an open Bible, and the Holy Spirit given him, descend to such an arena? God has spoken; and it is ours to believe His word as to the future no less than the present and the past, all of which are equally known to Him and quite plainly enough revealed to us. There was a vast amount of conversion over the known world before the first century closed. Mere profession came in largely in the fourth century and onwards. Even were its appearances as genuine as some excellent men conceive during the last century, it would, according to scripture analogy, indicate no more than that grace was converting souls with unusual rapidity before judgment falls on increasing boldness of unbelief and blasphemy; just as the early labors were the most fruitful among the Jews before God destroyed Jerusalem.

In chapter 9. Mr. A. has the easy and sure task of answering the question, Could all religion pass away without causing moral and social deterioration? Sir J. S. is summoned himself to give testimony to the effect of doctrines on conduct; and this even when those who were educated as believers in God and among such became Atheists. “As a man's religion is, so will his morals be..... Many persons in these days wish to retain the morality which they like, after getting rid of the religion which they disbelieve. Whether they are right or wrong in disturbing the foundation, they are inconsistent in wanting to save the super-structure It should never be forgotten that opinions have a moral side to them.” This witness is true: let it suffice.

Chapter 118

Moral and Miraculous Evidence

As infidelity is natural to the mind of man, fallen as he is, the question of evidences meets with this propensity in the heart as much as the truth itself.

Evidences suppose either reluctance to receive or difficulties inherent in man as to the reception of truth. If man's mind met the truth as such at once, there would be no need of evidences. But men do reason to prove the truth; that is, it is not instinctively known or necessarily received.

Christianity declares the truth to be revealed in and by Christ and those sent by Him; and as to ordinary man, Christ has declared, “Because I tell you the truth, ye believe Me not.” Again, “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came to His own, and His own received Him not.” “The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” That truth was found by man is false. It was not. Man arrived at “What is truth?” Christ came to bear witness to it.

Now assuming that there is such a thing as truth (and there must be, or there is nothing; for if there is something, a true statement or knowledge of what it is, is truth), either man is omniscient, or he wants the truth to be made known to him. If he does, he wants evidences, unless he be so absolutely proper for its reception, that to state it is sufficient for reception (that is, unless the truth be self-evident). If he be not so receptive of the truth (and we are sure he is not), he needs evidences of it, because he has reluctance or difficulties.

But I go farther. Truth cannot be self-evident to a creature; because, let men be as proud as they will, in a creature the moral condition depends on the object he is occupied with. Is it gold? He is covetous. Power? He is ambitious. And so on. Hence the moral condition is the fruit of the object. There may be lasts and tendencies dormant; but actual character is determined by an object. Now to know goodness as a creature without a revelation of it, I must be perfectly good. But I am not far from it. When therefore it comes, it finds me not perfectly good, that is, so far averse to what is good. I do not know whether anyone pretends to being perfect goodness: if not, he is something as a morally active being; he is selfish. Is it not true?

A revelation of perfect goodness meets selfishness, which is incapable of receiving it. Besides, in fact there is corruption, prejudice, superstition, into which selfishness has formed itself. And God, Who is light, as well as love, makes havoc with this. “No man, having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better.” If your infidel says, Man is innocent, and education has given him prejudices, and connected his will with his lusts, so as to make passions, I say, Be it so. I do not believe it; but be it so. But man is educated; he is a Jew, a heathen, a Romanist, a Protestant. Pure truth comes; it meets his prejudices, and evidences are needed. If these are sent, it is the activity of grace. They are not simply to prove the truth (to a mind that sees the truth as truth, it needs no truth); but to prove it to men, because man is prejudiced, and deeply prejudiced.

But man has a conscience, and the truth does reach it, even when will is opposed; he has a heart, year selfishness, and is miserable; he can feel goodness, though opposed to the claim of God

over his will as light and love. For if God reveals Himself, He must claim subjection, and, to bless, must make man give up his own will, that will which is alienation from God and mixes in his lusts. Attraction is felt, the claim is felt in conscience, the claim of goodness, the beauty of what is holy felt in conscience, what God is is felt. But these are deep obscurities through prejudice and lusts, and reluctance through feeling how much it will cost; ignorance of what God ought to be, prejudice against what He is. “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”

What is to be done? Man ought to receive grace and truth, light and love. Yet he would not want it revealed if he were not morally in contradiction with it. God gives adequate evidences to overtop prejudices, to force on the mind that what is presented to it must be a revelation of God. Men have inquired as to receiving truths because of miracles, or miracles because of truths. Both or neither. Men ought to receive truth because it is truth—abstractedly, they ought. For unfallen he does not need a revelation; fallen puts the case that he is indisposed. But abstractedly a nature suited to truth would receive the truth. “If I tell you the truth, why do ye not believe Me?”

But this is not so. Man does not like to come to the light because his deeds are evil. God therefore in grace gives evidences, miracles if you please, when the revelation of the truth is there; not when, to speak historically, it has been admitted as truth. But this is great grace. “Believe Me,” says Christ, “that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the very works' sake.” There is the place of truth and of miracles. Salvation “at first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by them that heard it, God bearing witness by signs and wonders,” &c.— “confirming the word by signs following.” When faith was founded only on miracles, the Lord did not own it (John 2): there was nothing moral in it. But He did give miracles to help men to believe the holy truth of love.

But men say, all is to be reduced to general laws. And if anything cannot, it is not to be believed. God would not disturb general laws. The most general law is that God is love; and miracles used as they were show this more than a physical law. Compared with miracles, general laws are nothing as a revelation of God to fallen man. There are general laws, admittedly; and an increasing number of phenomena may be reduced to them; and perhaps, had we all the secrets of nature, all of them. Supposing that, however irregular phenomena may appear, all can be reduced to general laws, do I know hereby a personal God? I do not know Him morally.

Chapter 119

The Morning-Star

This is an exclusively New Testament designation of Christ, and of course in relation to His coming to receive His own for heaven. In Rev. 2:28 He promises the overcomer the “morning star,” besides power over the nations and judgment of them in the day of His public and earthly glory. Even in the kingdom of God there are heavenly as well as earthly things. There is the “day” when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise unto Israel then fearing His name with healing in His wings. The wicked shall be trodden down as ashes under their feet in that day. But the Morning Star is not for Israel. It is for the faithful now, for Christians while Israel are still unbelieving. It is for those that watch in the night before the day. Being children of light and of the day, it is not for us to sleep as do others, but to watch and be sober. To such will the Lord give the Morning Star—Himself on high before the day; so that, when He shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. With this agrees Rev. 22:16 beautifully in its season. 2 Peter 1:19 had shown the all-importance for the saint meanwhile to have, not only the prophetic word as a lamp shining in the squalid place of the earth, but the heavenly hope—daylight dawning and the daystar arising in the heart. For that hope is pre-eminently for the affections as a practical object and power.

Chapter 120

Napoleon's Testimony to Christ at St. Helena

Certainly the spirit of that child of revolution and scourge of Europe before our day was not with Christ in his bitterness against those whose duty it was to hold him fast, as well as the powers that authorized it. But such as it is, it may interest some, as said to the unbelieving companion of his exile, General Bertrand—

“I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and every other religion the distance of infinity.

“We can say to the authers of every other religion, You are neither gods nor the agents of Deity. You are but missionaries of falsehood, molded from the same clay with the rest of mortals. You are made with all the passions and vices inseparable from them. Your temples and your priests proclaim your origin. Such will be the judgment, the cry of conscience, of whoever examines the gods and the temples of paganism.

“Paganism was never accepted as truth by the wise men of Greece, neither by Socrates, Pythagoras, Plato, Anaxagoras nor Pericles. But on the other side the loftiest intellects since the advent of Christianity have had faith, a living faith, a practical faith, in the mysteries and the doctrines of the gospel; not only Bossnet and Fenelon who were preachers, but Descartes and Newton, Leibnitz and Pascal, Corneille and Racine, Charlemagne and Louis XIV. [But hear Christ in Matt. 11:25, 26.]

“Paganism is the work of man. One can here read but our imbecility. What do these gods, so boastful, know more than other mortals? these legislators, Greek or Roman? this Numa, this Lycurgus? these priests of India or of Memphis? this Confucius, this Mahomet? Absolutely nothing. They have made a perfect chaos of morals. There is not one among them all who has said anything new in reference to our future destiny, to the soul, to the essence of God, to the creation. Enter the sanctuaries of paganism—you there find perfect chaos, a thousand contradictions, the immobility of sculpture, the division and the rending of unity, the parceling out of the divine attributes, mutilated or denied in their essence, the sophisms of ignorance and presumption, polluted fêtes, impurity and abomination adored, all sorts of corruption festering in the, thick shades, with the rotten wood, the idol and his priest. Does this honor God, or does it dishonor Him? Are these religions and these gods to be compared with Christianity?

“As for me, I say no. I summon entire Olympus to my tribunal. I judge the gods, but am far from prostrating myself before their vain images. The gods, the legislators of India and of China, of Rome and of Athens, have nothing which can overawe me. Not that I am unjust to them; no, I appreciate them, because I know their value. Undeniably princes whose existence is fixed in the memory as an image of order and beauty—such princes were no ordinary men. I see in Lycurgus, Nnma, and Mahomet, only legislators who having the first rank in the state have sought the best solution of the social problem; but I see nothing there which reveals divinity. They themselves

never raised their pretensions so high. As for me, I recognize the gods and these great men as being like myself. They have performed a lofty part in their times, as I have done. Nothing announces them divine. On the contrary there are numerous resemblances between them and myself, foibles and errors which ally them to me and to humanity.

“It is not so with Christ. Everything in Him astonishes me. His Spirit overawes me, and His will confounds me. Between Him and everyone else in the world there is no possible term of comparison. He is truly a being by Himself. His ideas and His sentiments, the truths which He announces, His manner of convincing, are not explained either by human organization or by the nature of things. His birth, and the history of His life; the profundity of His doctrines which grapples the mightiest difficulties, and which is, of those difficulties, the most admirable solution; His gospel, His apparition, His empire, His march across the ages and the realms, everything is to me a prodigy, a mystery insoluble, which plunges me into a reverie from which I cannot escape, a mystery which is there before my eyes, a mystery which I can neither deny nor explain. Here I see nothing human.

“The nearer I approach, the more carefully I examine, everything is above, everything remains grand—of a grandeur which overpowers. His religion is a revelation from an intelligence which certainly is not that of man. There is there a profound originality, which has created a series of words and of maxims before unknown. Jesus borrowed nothing from our sciences. One can absolutely find nowhere, but in Him alone, the imitation or the example of His life. He is not a philosopher, since He advances by miracles; and from the commencement His disciples worshipped Him. He persuades them far more by an appeal to the heart than by any display of method and of logic. Neither did He impose upon them any preliminary studies or any knowledge of letters. All His religion consists in believing.

“In fact the sciences and philosophy avail nothing for salvation; and Jesus came into the world to reveal the mysteries of heaven and the laws of the Spirit. Also He has nothing to do but with the soul, and to that alone He brings His gospel. The soul is sufficient for Him, as He is sufficient for the soul. Before Him the soul was nothing. Matter and time were the masters of the world. At His voice—everything returns to order, science and philosophy become secondary. The soul has reconquered its sovereignty. All the scholastic scaffolding falls, as an edifice ruined, before one single word—faith!

“What a Master, and what a word, which can effect such a revolution! With what authority does He teach men to pray! He imposes His belief, and no one thus far has been able to contradict Him: first, because the gospel contains the purest morality, and also because the doctrine which it contains of obscurity is only the proclamation and the truth or that which exists which no eye can see and no reason penetrate. Who is the insensate who will say ‘No’ to the intrepid voyager who recounts the marvels of the icy peaks which he alone has had the boldness to visit? Christ is that bold voyager. [Rather irreverent methinks.] One can doubtless remain incredulous; but no one can venture to say it is not so.”

Chapter 121

Occupation With Faults of Others a Bad Sign

It is a poor sign of repentance when a person is occupied with the faults of others. Rather does this betray the working of a hardened heart—of one who is not before God about his own faults. When conscience is exercised, God deals with self in His sight.

Chapter 122

One Thing I Do: Part 1

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing [I do]; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Thus, a man could speak, who was subject to like passions as we are. And not only so—he was "the chief of sinners," which in his case was not a mere expression of false humility, but the simple truth, for he had been a blasphemer and injurious, persecuting the church of God. Like his namesake of old, he also had been "granted by request," but in a very different sense! The former had been given by Jehovah "in His wrath" to be king over His people, at their obstinate request, because they preferred a government after the manner of the nations to Jehovah's government. But the "Saul" of the New Testament was the fruit of the prayer of the first Christian martyr— "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" —to whose death Saul had consented, and been an active witness of it. The Saul of the Old Testament had been David's persecutor; the Saul of the New Testament had persecuted David's Son and Lord. The former was "little in his own eyes," when he was anointed king of Israel. But he did not continue in that godly condition of soul, but became high-minded, self-willed and disobedient to God, and hence lost his throne and life. The Saul of the N. Testament, regarded as a prince among his people, was great before men at the beginning of his career. But the great "Saul" was changed into "Paul," i.e. "small" ("Paulus"). He became "little in his own eyes, but like Christ's humble forerunner, "great before the Lord."

And what more helpful, beloved, to render us "little in our own eyes," than keeping them, in the power of the ungrieved Spirit of glory, fixed on Christ, our Head in glory? Paul had been "apprehended" by the Lord of glory, and thus he "followed after," that he might "apprehend that for which he had been apprehended of Christ."

One constantly meets with the expression of "Saul's conversion." Now the meaning of "conversion" is the being turned right about face, so that the face is where the back had been, as in the case of the Thessalonians. Although this was, of course, true of Saul in a Jewish sense, yet the Lord's dealing with him on his way to Damascus had the especial character, that he was "apprehended" by Christ.

When on his way to Damascus, persecuting the church of God, Saul had reached the highest round of the ladder of Jewish perfection. He was in the zenith of his religions fame and influence, carrying with him the letters of the high priest for persecuting the Christians at Damascus. Then and there it was, that a light brighter than the sun at noon, came down from the rejected and glorified Christ, and shone all around, and laid the persecutor flat on his face in the dust. It was a personal question between the glorified Christ and Saul. Thus the person of Jesus is prominent throughout this chapter (Acts 9), as in the preceding chapter it is the person of the Holy Ghost. The greater the halo of Saul's religious renown and attainments had been, the deeper was his fall and the more complete the crash and smash of everything in which he had trusted and gloried.

But whilst the overpowering light from the glorified Christ laid Saul low in the dust, it required a still greater power to turn a Saul into a Paul. It was the Divine power of those words addressed by the glorified Head of the church to its persecutor, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” Those few words shook his soul to its inmost depths; and not his soul only, but also the religions scaffolding on which he had been building and in which he had trusted. What a terrible discovery those few words from the glorified One there above did effect on the smitten down one here below! Why, to be a zealous devoted Israelite was to be at open war with Jehovah, Whom he thought he was serving. A fearful discovery indeed! Not one single moral element of his soul could stand against its all-powerful and overwhelming effect. His soul alike with his body lay prostrate in the dust.

But this was not all. Those whom Saul persecuted were so entirely identified with that glorified One, Whom he had now to own as “Lord,” that to persecute them was the same as to persecute Him—the Head of that wondrous body called out from glory, when its members were assailed on earth. Marvelous mystery, all powerful in its revelation! But to the zealous Jew a still more crushing discovery was impending, which “pricked and cut his heart,” if possible, more deeply still than were the hearts of his co-religionists at Pentecost, in whose persecution he was engaged. At the trembling inquiry of the prostrate persecutor, “Who art Thou, Lord?” the reply comes from glory, “I am Jesus, the Nazaraean, Whom thou persecutest.” The “Nazaraean,” Whose very name was sufficient to elicit from a Jew words and gestures of deepest hatred, was the Lord of glory, David's Son and Lord at the right hand of God!—that name, which Saul had thought it his duty to oppose with all his energy, and which, if possible, he fain would have blotted out from the earth. Jesus, the Nazaraean, “rejected by the builders,” was the Prophet and Messias Whom Moses and the prophets had announced—the same Jehovah, Whom Saul had thought to serve by his persecution. More powerful than the light from glory, which had blinded his natural eyes, was the light from the glorified One, disclosing the truth to his inward eye. That truth, terrible as it was for the moment to Saul, proved to be of immeasurably blessed consequences to himself and to the church of God, which he had persecuted. That discovery was the “coup de grace” for the Judaism in Saul. God, Who now commanded the light to shine out of darkness, had shined in Saul's heart to give the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

But a continuous three days' blindness with fasting was required for Saul, for the deepening and maturing of God's work in him and to enlighten the eyes of his mind. Then, after the scales, as it were, had fallen from his eyes inwardly and outwardly, and he had been baptized by Ananias and been filled with the Holy Ghost, there proceeded from the house of Judas in the “straight” street a new man— “Paul” instead of “Saul;” instead of the merciless persecutor of Christ and His Christians, the fearless preacher of His name and grace and glory, “preaching straightway Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God,” and also “the very Christ.” He was a witness of faith, who, as he once had assisted in shedding the blood of Christians, from henceforth devoted his whole life to their service, ready to be “poured out as a libation on the sacrifice and ministration of their faith,” till at last he also, like Stephen, the martyr and witness of Christ's glory, sealed with his own blood the testimony of his Christian career, so blessed and fruitful for his time and the ages to come.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 123

One Thing I Do: Part 2

As has been observed already, that which in such an especial way characterized the apostle, was his being “apprehended of Christ.” As an historical fact it was done on his way to Damascus, but it served to imprint upon his whole being and character that particular stamp which distinguishes him from other servants of the Lord. Christ, the glorified Head of the church, His body, at the right hand of God is the glorious subject of his testimony as well as of his individual walk. The apostle's heart and mind were directed towards one point only—Jesus, the once persecuted and rejected Nazaraean there above. Not only Paul's outward man, but his whole inner, yea, his inmost man, heart, mind and spirit, had been “apprehended” or laid hold of, by the glorified Christ. As the plant turns towards the sun, so all the powers and inclinations of the new man and of the resurrection life of Christ in the apostle turned towards the glorified Son of man, in the energy of the Spirit of glory that rested upon him and filled him. As the magnet needle, though trembling through the motions of the vessel, invariably tarns towards the pole, so the heart of the apostle of the church turned to its glorified Head. That unique goal, surpassingly beautiful and all glorious for which he had been “apprehended,” he sought to apprehend although he had not yet apprehended it. What formerly he had been, when Saul—a zealous upright Israelite, pursuing a certain aim with his whole heart and with unabating zeal, serving God from his forefathers with a pure conscience—he was now in a better and infinitely higher sense as the servant of Christ and apostle of the church. In the third chapter of his Epistle to his beloved Philippians, that goal which he pursued, is most distinctly put before us.

What had appeared to be a gain to Saul, the zealous Israelite, was counted by Paul not only nothing, but positive loss. All those religious privileges, connected with the dispensation of the law of Moses, granted by God to His earthly people, invested as they were with the halo of the grand historical recollections of more than fifteen centuries, were now for Paul nothing but “flesh” —religious respectable flesh in the splendid, gorgeous, apparel of the religious ceremonies of Judaism, but after all nothing but “flesh.” What formerly had appeared to him as “gain” the apostle of glory counted but “loss” “for Christ,” the glorified “Jesus,” Who had appeared to him on his way to Damascus. Neither was that depreciation of all his former religious privileges and attainments with Paul a mere transitory sentiment in the first zeal of conversion. He continued to count all these things “loss” (Phil. 3:8), the more he knew the now glorious, all gracious, all beauteous Person of Him Whose name had once filled him with hatred. Mark the longer period in ver. 8. In ver. 7 he counted it all “loss” “for Christ.” But in ver. 8 he continues “Yea, doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” When a strong wind arises, high and long billows arise in the sea; a gentle breeze only produces low and short wavelets. It is the same with spiritual motions. When our mind is engaged with a beautiful and interesting object, or the heart moved by a mighty and elevating idea, we express ourselves in longer periods than in speaking or writing of ordinary things. We find this for instance in the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, where the apostle, moved by the Spirit of God, pours out to the saints in Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus his heart, filled with the thoughts of

God's wondrous counsels and blessings in Christ Jesus. The whole of the chapter (excepting the usual apostolic benediction in ver. 1 & 2), consists of only two periods. The first of them (ver. 3 -14) contains no less than 12 verses, and the second (ver. 15-23) nine verses.

But the apostle does not content himself with saying that he continues to count as loss all things that were formerly gain to him, but he adds, “For Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” The polished and learned man, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, cannot find words strong enough to express his thorough abandonment of Judaism and of all its boasted privileges. The more he perceived the excellency and perfection of Jesus Christ, beholding with unvailed face the glory of the Lord, the more everything that had been formerly such a gain to him in the eyes of his co-religionists, appeared to him in the light of that glory not only “loss,” but “dung,” that he might “win Christ, and be found in Him “and “know Him.”

This reminds me of a dear saint, who followed the apostle, as he had followed his heavenly pattern, who during her earthly career always set the Lord before her. The Christian lady referred to, possessed a marvelous memory and was so familiar with her bible, that she was able at once to point out any passage in the Scriptures referred to, often not only the chapter, but chapter and verse. And the word of God was not merely stored up in the memory of the head, but she had taken care to treasure it up in the memory of her heart, like the Lord's blessed mother, for she was a true Mary, the Lord's devoted handmaid. But the constant admiration by unwise friends, of her wonderful memory had perhaps impaired in her that all-important quality of real Christian humility: or was it that it pleased God to give to her, like to His apostle of old, a “thorn in the flesh,” to prevent spiritual pride? However this may be, she was laid on a bed of sickness for many years, which at last impaired her memory to such a degree that the hitherto well known passages of Scripture—chapters and verses—began to be erased from the tablets of her memory. But this infirmity could neither reach nor diminish the “good treasure of her heart.” This very Epistle of Paul to the Philippians had been one of her favorite portions in the New Testament. So that now, the memory of the heart lasting longer than that of the head, and supporting the weakness of the latter, this epistle remained longest in her memory. But gradually even this portion began to vanish away, i.e. the words though not the contents; and she retained only these words, “that I may win Christ” — “and be found in Him” — “that I may know Him.” At last, having lost nearly all her memory, there remained on its empty tablet—its “tabula rasa,” only one single word engraved, the word— “HIM.” — “That's enough,” she said, “I have Him,” and nobody can take Him away from me, nor me from Him.”

“He,” Christ—was the sum of all her scriptural knowledge. All those Bible passages, formerly stored in the upper chamber of her memory, were now in the good treasure of the chamber of her heart, condensed in that one word, “Him” — “Christ.”

Is not this the right way of reading our Bibles, Christian reader? On the last page of holy writ, we find as the sum of the whole word of God, these two words, “I Jesus.” The Spirit and the Bride answer, “Come.” And at the close the Lord says, “Yea, I come quickly.” Can we, with His disciple, add in truth, “Amen, come, Lord Jesus”? We know that the Spirit and the Bride, His true church, as such, ever say, “Come” (ver. 17). But in ver. 20, it is John, as an individual believer, who says, “Amen, come Lord Jesus!” Can we add, in truth, our “Amen” to his? Only in the measure as Christ's ever blessed Person is our object, and we “rejoice in the Lord always,” keeping our

consciences sweet in His holy, yet, gracious presence, shall we be able to do so. Only in His presence can the hope of His coming again, have the power and comfort of a truly realized hope. The words, “I Jesus,” and, “Yea, I come quickly,” are in close connection.

Is it not the same in common life? Suppose, some one has gone into a far country, to prepare for his wife and family a better home. Every month brings them letters, each line breathing truest kindness and interest in the welfare of his own he has left behind, and proving that time and distance have not diminished his love and care for his own, and that he is ever the same loving and tenderly careful husband and father. Suddenly a telegram arrives with the news, “I come to-morrow to fetch you!” What an outburst of jubilant rapture will those few words, “I come to-morrow,” call forth from his own! They know what he is for them; therefore they feel what it means, when he says, “I come!”

And how comes it, beloved, that the hope of our Lord's coming again, which we may expect every day, nay, every moment, has so little effect upon our hearts, our consciences, and our walk? How is it, that this precious portion of Christian truth, which formerly used to occupy the chief place in any meetings for Christian edification, so often recedes into the far background, so that for weeks, nay, even for months, scarcely any reference even is made to it? It used not to be so. What has caused this sad change which has come upon us? Is it not this, that the eyes of our minds, and, in consequence, our hearts and thoughts, have turned away from the glorified One at the right hand of God, and from His all-glorious, all-gracious, all-beauteous, and altogether lovely Person, and so been turned away to earthly things? We have ceased to realize what He is, “Jesus Christ, yesterday, to-day, and forever, the same.” Thus the hope of His coming again has lost its cheering, refreshing, comforting power as to the walk of so many believers, reducing them practically or doctrinally to the level of the world or of the religious “camp.” It was not so with the apostle of the church of glory, nor with his beloved Philippians, whom he called “his joy and his crown.”

(Continued from page 61.)

(To be continued.)

Chapter 124

One Thing I Do: Part 3

What a power of attraction lies in a beautiful and desirable goal! It sets into motion all the spiritual and bodily capacities. The more glorious the goal, the greater the effort to reach it. Day by day this may be perceived in the pursuits of this world, so vain and yet so eagerly and perseveringly carried on, it may be at a race or regatta, where every muscle, nerve, and sinew is being strained to the utmost to reach the desired goal; or in the arena of political ambition, or military fame, or other vanities of this world, where, in the pursuit of the fervently coveted goal, other attractive objects lose their charm, the competitors being wholly absorbed with the goal of attraction before them, which does not permit of side looks. The nearer to the goal, the greater the efforts, perseverance, and undivided attention of the one who runs in the race. Many otherwise attractive objects by the wayside are scarcely perceived, and soon left behind in the distance.

Judaism with its privileges, ceremonies, and self-efforts, so attractive and desirable to the religious natural man, remained like a distant coast far behind Paul, making for the shore of resurrection, and for Him Who stood on that shore, not only a risen Savior, as He appeared to His fishing disciples on this earthly shore (John 21)—to show them, that He, though risen, with the same love as when He was daily walking with them on earth, continued to care for their earthly necessities—but as the ascended and glorified head of the church, as He appeared to Stephen, His martyr, and to Paul, Stephen's persecutor, on his way to Damascus. All those splendid religious privileges had paled and faded away before Paul's glorious goal of attraction. When the sun rises, not only the darkness disappears but also the stars.

All those things that had appeared desirable to Paul, the Jew, lay now behind him like a distant coast; nay, lie had entirely lost sight of them, though not of his former co-religionists. To him not only did all these things appear to be nothing but dung; but, more so, he had forgotten them altogether. Sometimes we hear a Christian with great animation “recounting” what he has “given up” for Christ and for Christian truth. He thereby only shows how much he values that which he professes to have given up for Christ, and how little he has realized what Christ has given up for him, and not only given up, but also given, for He “gave Himself for us.” He further proves how far he is from having understood the meaning of our apostle when he wrote to the same Philippians: “For unto you it is given, on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” Such looking back towards the religious “camp,” from which one professes to have gone forth “unto Him” (Heb. 13:13), further shows that one has not yet arrived at that happy forgetfulness of those Old Testament witnesses of faith in the eleventh chapter of the same Epistle to the Hebrews, who were not even “mindful of that country from whence they came out” (ver. 15). When all those things, which once appeared a precious “gain” to Saul, had become to Paul naught but “loss” and “dung” for Christ's sake, he did not think that he had “given up” something for Christ's sake. One does not give up dung, one throws it away, if one sees it really to be such. A “gain” I might give up, but a “loss” I do not give up, but avoid it. And as those blessed forefathers of the apostle had forgotten that country from whence they came out, so Paul forgot the “camp,” with its contents so dear and precious, and its recollections so sacred to the heart of a Jew. To him all

this had become not only “flesh,” “loss,” and even “dung,” but he continues, “One thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

If any one might speak of having “given up” something for Christ, Paul was the man. But to him all this was now only “that which is behind.” What is behind is soon forgotten, especially if it is nothing but dung. So Paul, the apostle, had forgotten all that which to the zealous Jew, Saul, had been the most precious privileges and glorious attainments. Was it because these privileges and blessings given by God to His earthly people were esteemed lightly by him? Or had his heart, since he had been “apprehended by Christ,” been alienated from his former co-religionists through the bitter persecution he had suffered from them? Such a spirit was far from him. Let his own words speak. “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish to be accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the services, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen” (Rom. 9:1-5).

These words show that Paul, the apostle, did not esteem lightly the privileges which God had given to Israel. And so great was his love to his “brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh,” that like Moses (who wished to be blotted out of the book of God, if He would not pardon Israel's sin), Paul also had wished, for his people's sake, to be banished from Christ with a curse. And this after all the bitter persecution and abuse he had to experience at their hands! But as the sun with renewed and fresh splendor breaks through the dark clouds and scatters them, so at the close of that memorable passage, in even heightened splendor shines forth the priceless value and glory of Christ, “Who is over all, God blessed forever.” Amen.

All these splendid privileges of Judaism disappeared before Christ, the glorified Head of the church, as the fog before the sun. To the Hebrews the apostle wrote, “Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away;” and to the Corinthians, “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. Therefore if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

Apprehended by Christ, he sought to apprehend the glorious prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, forgetting those things which to him were “behind,” and reaching forth unto those things which were before him, his eyes steadily looking towards the goal, and thus “pressing toward the mark.” And let us heed what follows: “Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” And, “Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” “For our conversation [or citizenship] is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall change our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working, whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

Christian reader, is your “horn filled with oil?” (1 Sam. 16:1.) Are we “filled with the Spirit” Who glorifieth Christ, receiveth from His, and showeth it unto us? if so, we shall be able to discern a

false Christ from a true one; and our hearts, like Mary's pure and white alabaster box, will be filled with the precious “ointment of pure nard, very costly,” that is with adoring thoughts of Him Who is “altogether lovely, and the chief among ten thousands” —thoughts of adoration and thanksgiving to God, from Whom all blessings flow, and to His dear Son, in Whom all blessings are. And our eye, fixed by the power of the Holy Ghost on the glorified Christ, will make “the whole body light,” and thus enable us, steadily looking toward the goal before us, after the example of the apostle of the church and of glory, to “press on toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” until He, Who is “our hope,” and our bright morning star,” shall come to take us up to Himself into the Father's house, whither He has gone before to prepare a place for us. Blessed be His glorious name, now and evermore. Amen.

J. A. VON P.

(Concluded from page 75.)

Chapter 125

Ordinances

With the Apostle Paul there was a great question between faith and ordinances; but he never surrendered the right of the one to the pretensions of the other.

In the former dispensation ordinances abounded. The soul, so to express it, was only on the way to salvation then; but now we are called to enjoy accomplished and perfected salvation, to know it by faith. “For by grace are ye saved through faith.”

Accordingly, all the ordinances of the house of God in this age are celebrations, and not helps. They are made to celebrate our redemption, and we triumph in them instead of being helped by them. Baptism celebrates our personal salvation, and the Supper in the midst of the assembled saints tells of their redemption by blood, the blood of the precious Lamb of God. But so in like manner other ordinances, the covered female and the uncovered male, and the presence of the Lord Jesus in the midst of the gathered saints, have voices likewise that are heard telling of salvation. And so, outside or abroad in the world, all our service (being the service of love and gratitude), and the prospect of our souls (being in expectation and desire, and not fear), with equal certainty and clearness tell the same mystery of fall deliverance. We wait for the Son from heaven Who is our Deliverer from the wrath to come.

All, in a certain sense, though in a different way, celebrate salvation. The ordinances of God's present house may remind us of the lame man who took up his bed and walked as soon as Jesus had spoken the word of healing to him; for, in token of perfected health and strength, we hold up what once helped and strengthened and sustained us.

Chapter 126

Our State of Things and Christ in Them

It is a striking expression of the state of things in which we are, that Christ not simply works miracles and sets aside the power of Satan wherever He is, but gives power to His disciples to do it. Yet John the Baptist is put to death, and it is not hindered. And He would not do any mighty works in His own country, Mark 6

Chapter 127

Parable of the Sower

There is so much instruction in the scripture, that I find it impossible, in giving a few hints on any portion of the text of it, to attempt to bring out the breadth and length of its various applications. Indeed, as flowing from God, and bearing continually the impress of the fullness of His character, I constantly find, in opening (under God's mercy) any particular passage at different times and under different circumstances, that it presents itself in bearings so entirely different, that, although not in reality inconsistent, they could not be thought, by one untaught of God, to be drawn from the same passage. It is this which so strongly marks and contrasts the word of God with any human writings. While these are the expressions of a judgment formed on results, or the imperfect discussion of unascertained thought, the writing of God is the expression of the full perfectness of the divine mind, bearing upon that which diversified it (while in itself intrinsically the same), according to the infinitely various reflection of that on which it expresses itself. This was true intrinsically in Christ, in whom dwelt all fullness; and the scriptures are the divine expression of that fullness.

This leads us to remember how one ought to lean upon the Spirit for the right use of scripture, and also in speaking on it, for He alone knows its right and suitable application. We also learn why the best commentators must be so entirely imperfect, or I would say, we see the evil of the, best commentators. For they cannot express the applicable power of the divine mind in the circumstances of the person reading, but merely what their mind has received out of it at the time of writing. But this may not be at all what the individual or church needs, or the Spirit would give at another time: and this too, on the supposition that every comment is right as far as it goes—is a part of the divine mind in the scripture. Hence the poverty of understanding, and the systems also into which men have fallen, and hence also, partly, that divisions in the church have been established as they are.

I have been led into this, by attempting to offer some thoughts on the parable of the sower, given by our Lord in Matt. 13, a parable on which so many lectures have been given, differing perhaps in many important applications, yet all, where the mind of Spirit was, acknowledging the same general truths, and not interpreting the parable inconsistently. Nor is this by any means confined to this passage. The Lord has led me to speak of this, I am conscious, with most different applications at different times, and perhaps in each, only bringing out small portions of the divine mind. In writing the following remarks, I am but doing the same thing, yet I think in a view neither unimportant nor uninteresting as far as it goes. I could not attempt here to use it as I might in addressing others, but merely to afford the view itself, with any casual scriptural confirmation of it.

It is most important for us to remember, that all that which is the power of death in the unbeliever is the hindrance and blight of the fruit-bearing power of the believer's life, to which the energies afforded in the divine persons apply themselves. This is brought out into full light in the graciousness of God, with its specific remedy, in this parable. There is the case of the fowls of the air, the stony ground, the sowing among thorns, and in the good ground, thirty, sixty, and a

hundred fold. The first of these, we know, is the power of Satan, the power of death. There is no life in the soul. When the word of it is sown in the unbroken heart, the devil takes it away as soon as it is sown. He holds it in unremoved death. The word is the power of life. “Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.” It is indeed the lie of the devil, by which he brought in death, and holds men in it, in which he is a murderer; so on the other hand, by the truth of God are we made alive.

But there is one (Himself indeed the WORD) who is specifically the quickening power, even the Son of God. “The last Adam is a quickening spirit.” He then who vindicates from this state of death, and makes alive, is the Son of God. The Son of man sows the seed, but it is the Son of God who quickens. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.” It is the special distinctive character of His Sonship, that He quickens with divine power, as indeed none else could. Compare John 5:21, 24, 26. This is most explicit, and no one acquainted with scripture can have failed to recognize the power of life in the Son of God as distinctly representing His quickening character. He declares Himself, “I am the Resurrection and the Life,” and this is by His word, “Lazarus come forth.” The results of this we shall not now follow; but we have the Son of God, by the word, destroying the works of the devil in the state and power of death. This is the first case of the parable. That which is in Him is the opposite power, which overcomes the evil case mentioned, and a man brings forth thirty fold, for being really alive he must increase and bring forth fruit.

But there is another case put, not so apparently desperate, but equally destructive—the receiving the word into shallow ground. There was no root. It was received superficially; it speedily “sprang up because it had no deepness of earth “; it had no searching process of power in which it entered into the conscience, and quickened the inner man. It rested in the natural affections and understanding, which are, after all, the flesh. It is received merely by the natural feelings, and therefore immediately acts, and with joy, since it reaches not the conscience. And the same natural feelings were of course as speedily acted on by trouble and persecution, and “immediately they are offended” (compare Mark 4). This then is all merely the flesh and comes to nothing. To this we know how uniformly the Spirit is opposed. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other.” “They that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” “If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds,” &c. It needs not to multiply the passages of scripture to show the opposition of these two. But we must observe that we have here, in the Spirit, the antagonist power which overcomes the flesh; and, assuming a man to be alive, it still does so. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit.” Hence we know that this case is still the natural man, and that the things of the Spirit are what he has never received, though affections or intellect may have been moved or delighted with the marvelous plan of redemption. But the same point holds good in a believer; that is, we find when men do not walk in the Spirit, of course they are profitless and low in their state. It is in mortifying the flesh by the Spirit, that the fruits of the Spirit find comparatively free growth—it produces sixty fold. This then is the contrast here—the flesh and the Spirit; and we find in it, that the fairest form of the flesh, the apparently joyful reception of the word of the kingdom, whether it be in affection or intellect, comes to nothing; whatever it may be occupied on, it is but “the desires of the flesh and of the mind.”

The third case, compared with scripture, is equally, I think, clear. The hindering power is declared directly, “the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things” (compare Mark 4, Luke 8). Now the world and the love of it we continually find opposed to the Father. “All that is in 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.” “Love not the world, neither the things of the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The hatred of the world to the Son showed that it was not of the Father; and the children were not of this world any more than the Father, as allied to Him, even as Christ the Son was not of the world.

Every one familiarly and spiritually acquainted with the Gospel of John, must have noticed the opposition between the world and the Sonship of Christ, one being associated with the Father, and the other directly opposed to the glory of the Father in the great question of that Sonship in which it alone was known. Our Lord thus concludes the whole presenting of His work and His people to the Father— “O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me.” The whole chapter illustrates the question. Now we shall hence well understand the opposition between the two, and how “He who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world,” closes that statement by saying, “And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love,” &c.

But in the believer, even when not only quickened, but in the Spirit, exercising himself to mortify the deeds of the body, who recognizes at once the evil of the flesh (though we are little aware how subtilely and widely its beguiling and deceiving influence is spread, how fair a form inbred selfishness may assume), and in whom, in an ordinary sense, the flesh is habitually in a measure mortified—how often do we find the world holding a prevailing power and recognized title over the judgment or habit, and the fruitfulness, comparatively speaking, utterly marred. “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples.” Let us recognize then a priori, that is, from scripture (excluding the consideration of the circumstances in which the lie of this world has power over our mind), that the world is a positive hinderer of fruitfulness, the much fruit in which the Father is glorified; and for this plain reason, that our sonship, our inheritance, the kingdom is not recognized. The devil as he acts on us by the flesh— “the lust of the flesh,” “good for food,” or “of the eyes,” and the like, is the god and prince of this world; and the Spirit in them that are quickened, where not dimmed and darkened by the spirit of this world, is not only the power of the difference of the carnal and spiritual nature, but bears witness that we are sons and heirs. Thus, at liberty, we cry by it, “Abba, Father,” and the fruits are an hundred fold, where we are free from the system in which we are fettered. The energy of the kingdom is there, the savor of the kingdom is there, the stamp of the Father of glory, and hence, in deadness to the world, power over it. The whole stamp of nature is different: we are not of the world as Christ is not of the world. Accordingly as we find the Lord the true vine, so we find the Father the husbandman, purging the branches that they may bring forth more fruit. We may be isolated indeed, but isolated sons, upon whom the glory of the Father shines in hope, and the power of inward association—the sons of God, though in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. In a word, the children of God—the God Who hath called us to “His own kingdom and glory,” the living God—is our distinguishing title; and as the Jews were affianced to Jehovah, we are called to be “perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

I cannot pursue this subject farther here, though I may touch on it, with the Lord's permission, at a future time. As regards the explanation of the parable, I would say a few words more. The inseparableness of the evils, as well as of the gracious agents of covenant remedy, is not in question; the devil, the world, and the flesh, are too intimately associated to need explanation of our distinct consideration of them; and I believe more intimately than people are commonly aware of. Of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, I need not speak; but while we have spoken of them in operation as to profit, we must not forget their unity in every act. Whether in creation or anything else, they invariably act in one, and as invariably, as far as I see, in the same order, that is by the Son, through the energy of the Spirit.

Another remark is necessary. Al though we have looked at the love of the world as hindering the full characteristic fruitfulness of the children of God, and the knowledge and love of the Father as the contrasted character, we must remember that this knowledge in principle is the position of every believer. “I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father;” nor could we otherwise put all believers under this responsibility. But I believe it will be found that the measure of the fruitfulness of the life that is in them much depends on their exercise in the truths here noticed and dwelt on; and that the character of their fruitfulness also much depends on their deeper and fuller apprehension of the one or the other; and that the apprehension of the Father in the full development of the Sonship glory attaches quite a new character to the whole course of the Christian's life. This is our proper calling; and while we must watch against the neglect of distinct reference to the Son as administering the power of the kingdom against the “wicked one” —to the Spirit, as overcoming or detecting the workings and deceitful powers of the flesh—to the Father in contrast with the love of the world, a defective apprehension of the principle of heavenly glory will somewhere or other break down the efficiency of our Christian service. The fullness of all was in our Lord; the fullness of all help in them is our practical responsibility—the enjoyment of fellowship with them our privilege.

And here it may be remarked that ill-proportioned Christianity, I believe, continually springs from the power of Satan, through neglect of, or hindering, the special power of one or another of the Persons, while indulgence of any of the evils is apt to throw us into the hands of Satan. And here is the wisdom of ministering to sick souls, for the source of the evil may be one, its manifestation may be another. How blessed to be able to refer to covenant assurance of a threefold Almighty help for the several difficulties one evil may bring! A believer will be healthful and strong against the enemy, in proportion as he has just reference to all. I do not say that a believer's progress is from knowing the Son, to the Spirit and the Father—far from it; but I believe the manifestation of the power and glory of their work will gradually unfold itself, even as the quickening by the Son will make the believer discern well the operations of the Spirit against the flesh, and both of these find their full development in the manifestation of the Father's glory, in the consciousness (if he grow healthful) that His kingdom is not of this world. In some cases of unusual energy of divine life, we see by God's calling all these apprehensions promptly developed and the man consequently abundantly exercised, and his service great, corresponding to the knowledge received of the Son in the kingdom, as in the apostles Peter and Paul; but I must not outstep the practical part of the subject.

I am quite conscious, indeed particularly so, of the imperfection of these remarks. But I feel the importance of the subject deeply; and the basis of the view has been given. They are open to the

correction or fuller application of those more versed in divine life—the wondrous and blessed grace of a developed covenant, the bright witness of the Son, and of the Father, and of glory; the grace in which they minister to the necessities of those who have no help in themselves, while they are the growingly understood and adored objects alike of communion and worship, separating from all that is not of themselves. I feel too, that in speaking thus, I am treading on holy ground, but ground which our God in His mercy has opened to us and on which we are set to walk; freed from every fear, unless of not justly estimating it, by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; cleansed from all that could offend by His blood; and acquainted with the boundless love which has brought us these by it, while never reaching it, never able to be filled with it, knowing that it has reached even to us and filled us with its own fullness.

Let us only also remember, that the indulgence in one of these seemingly remote evils brings in the power of the others, for God is not there. Thus Solomon's indulgence of the world brought in the indulgence of the flesh, and the consequence was the direct power of Satan in the idolatrous worship of his wives. We might mention similar instances, but I close for the present. Only one thing it is important to remark; it is not either by speculation or knowledge these things are obtained, though they may be ministered. “We are sanctified unto obedience.” The spirit of obedience is the great secret of all the present and practical blessings of the believer; for the Spirit is not grieved, and so becomes the minister of the grace and knowledge both of the Father and of the Son; and the poorest, simplest, believer walking thus, enjoys the blessings of the covenant faithfulness both of the Father, and the Lord, and the Spirit, to the blessed purposes of love in which we stand, and of divine glory. J. N. D.

[This was a very early paper of the author, who later on would probably have expunged “covenant” in connection with the subject before us.—En. B.T.]

Chapter 128

Patriarchal Faith

The patriarchs had come forth from the place of nature or of the flesh, in the faith of a promised inheritance in the land of Canaan. And what is to be noticed in the strength and victory of their faith is this—they cling to that promise, in spite of two very severe trials of it: that is, in the face of the poverty and sorrow and disappointment which they constantly experienced in the place of the promise; and also in spite of the desirableness and attractions and advantages which they enjoyed outside of it.

This is much to be observed; and it may be encouragement to us in such a time as the present.

There was a famine in Canaan in the days of Abraham, and again in the days of Isaac, and again in the days of Jacob. Abraham, moreover, witnessed in that land the abominations of Sodom, and the common strife and contention of the potsherds of the earth. Isaac is forced from one spot of it to another by the injurious treatment of the natives of that land. Jacob is forced out of it by the threats of his brother Esau. And further, it was the scene of humbling and of discipline to each of them in their day, by reason of their own evil ways in the sight of the Lord.

Such was Canaan to the patriarchs. They were, I may say, dishonored and disappointed, and well nigh heart-broken in that land of promise. But that which lay outside it was altogether different. It was just as attractive to them as Canaan had been trying and humbling.

Egypt, for instance, enriches Abraham when Canaan had left him at death's door; and to Jacob the same Egypt had become the scene and the occasion of all that heart or flesh could have desired; for he came to the end of a weary pilgrimage in that land. He had known plenty of sorrow in Canaan, both before he left it for Padan-aram, and after he returned; but Egypt at last made up to him, and much more, for all his losses and sorrows. By royal grant he received the fairest and richest portion of it. He was honored and cherished there, and saw his family in increasing prosperity around him. The desires of his heart seemed all to get their answer there. And, to crown all, Egypt restored to him what the wild beasts of Canaan had robbed him of: Joseph, whom he thought some beast in the promised. land had torn to pieces, was alive in Egypt, and the second man in the kingdom.

Here was Egyptian flattery and fascination indeed and that too, in full contrast with all that Canaan had been to him. At evening-time there was light; but it was an evening in Egypt. His eye might well have desired the lengthening and lingering of such a sunset; and his heart might have been tempted to contrast with it the clouds of his morning and his noon-day in Canaan. But faith is called a conqueror. It tries many a question with nature; and in some of the saints it gets many a fair and brilliant victory. And so was it here with Jacob, though it may be humbling to one's own heart to trace it. For we have here before us a beautiful witness that, in spite of all this, Canaan and not Egypt was the patriarch's object.

This is the victory that overcame Egypt then, and overcomes the world to this hour. No recollections of sorrows or disappointments in Canaan, no present possession of honors and

wealth in Egypt, moved him. The promise of God ruled in his heart. Of Canaan as promised of God he spoke; in Canaan he hoped; in the place of his present prosperity he was a stranger, and thought of home only in the degraded and impoverished land he had left behind him. It was in Canaan he would be buried. It was there he was in spirit when he blessed his children; and it was there he gave the double portion to his adopted firstborn.

There is something very fine in this; and for us something significant and seasonable. For I may surely say of the present time through which we are passing, there is the poor Canaan and the wealthy and important Egypt. That which, like Canaan to the patriarchs, connects itself with God in the thoughts of faith is in a small and enfeebled state, while the world around is growing in its proper greatness and strength and dignity every hour.

It may be hard to learn this lesson which Jacob practiced. We may see it on the page of his history, without finding it on any corresponding one of our own.

Joseph, however, after Jacob, illustrates this same power of faith. Egypt had received him, when Canaan had cast him out. Out of the one land he had been sold as a bond-slave; in the other he had been seated on the second seat in the kingdom. But withal (for faith is “the victory that overcometh the world”), Egypt never became Canaan to Joseph. The promise of God lived in Joseph's heart, as it had lived in Jacob's. Disappointments and sorrows in Canaan, flatteries and successes and honors in Egypt wrought not their natural results in that heart, because it was thus the seat of the promise of God. This was in the vigorous words of the apostle (in the patriarchal form which such energy would take) “a laying hold of eternal life” —which some of us know so little of.

But I must observe something further. It is felt by us to be a serious and hazardous thing at times, to let the world know that we have learned this lesson—that poor Canaan is better than wealthy Egypt. We fully understand that men cannot lightly have the good thing they are nourishing and improving thus slighted. It is a reproach on themselves, when the world is undervalued.

There was a moment in Joseph's history, as I judge, when he felt this, when he had this experience of which I speak.

Jacob, his father, when dying, had made him swear that he would bury him in the land of Canaan. When Joseph comes to act upon his oath, he seems to me to feel this, that he was about to venture on a serious and hazardous matter. He evidently sets himself as before a business which had its special difficulties. He was high at court, as we may say; for, as we read, the physicians, the court physicians, were his servants (chap. 1. 2). And we know the resources of the kingdom, the strength and wealth of the realm of Egypt, were at that moment under his hand. But still he hesitates about the matter of burying his father in Canaan, and gets the help and intercession of Pharaoh's near kindred.

Why all this? Was it not a small thing for so great a man to do? Yes; but a request to be buried in Canaan was, in some sense, putting a reproach upon Egypt. It seemed to say, after all, the Canaan of degradation and poverty was better than the Egypt of honor and wealth—that the gleanings of such an Ephraim were better than the vintage of such an Abiezer.

This was the language of Jacob's request; and Joseph felt it be a serious thing to convey such language to the ear of Pharaoh. But he did. Faith again triumphed; and after this manner is he a witness to us, that we should let the world distinctly learn from us, that, with all its advance and promise, it is nothing to us, while Christ's thing, though in weakness, is our object. J. G. B.

The Patriarchs

Abraham, depositary of the promises, is a stranger in the land of promise. All we read of his journey as owned of God (for he failed in not departing as the Lord had said) was, “he went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan he came.” We have no sign of the Lord being with him in the way he went down into Egypt, though He visited Pharaoh with plagues. His history, of which we have detail is, a stranger in the land of promise, communion with God as such, and depositary of the communications and promises of God.

Of Isaac we have nothing save the fact of his being offered (which was the act of Abraham, though Isaac is submissive, God providing Himself with a lamb for a burnt offering), and his going out to meet Rebecca. The history we have is of Eliezer fetching Rebecca to him, he being hidden. His dealings with Esau and Jacob only introduce these two—it is not his history. He represents Christ unseen and the church gathered.

As in Esan we have high-handed rebellion and self-will, in Jacob we have God with him in the path secretly by His providence, but a path occasioned by his evil and unbelief. In this sense, God with us “in the way” is a humbling, and to us an evil, place—blessed and patient grace, and turned to good and blessing, still a humbling place. God's name is not revealed to us in it, even when we prevail to have blessing by faith through His grace. God is with us “in the way,” but we should not be “in the way” if unbelief had not for a time put us out of the place of promise. Jacob was a stranger from, not in, the place of promise. The Lord would keep him and bring him again where he was a stranger, and his way and wanderings from Canaan. But he was going from this place which might be an anchor to him It would seem that the wrestling had not set his heart right; for he buys land and is not a stranger, and, but for God's providential interference, would have settled and made alliance. Also the strange gods were in his household, and he seems to have known it. He had not fairly come to God. Gen. 37:1 alone brings us back to his proper patriarchal Abrahamic place; and Allon Bachuth and Benoni accompany, or are connected with, the altar that was raised. Gen. 37:1 is grounded on 35: 27 and 36: 6.

How entirely in Jacob's history we descend into a lower sphere; also he had reason to say “few and evil.” But then we have more of the ways of God, and His supremacy above evil, and yet His dealing with evil, and therein His gracious process with the evil-doer; and all this is very precious to us.

Of Abraham, the called man, the friend of God, we have an ample history—of what man is in that place, imperfect surely, but most blessed. OF Isaac, the heavenly man, we have little or nothing but the fact that he gets a wife, and does not go back to the place he was called out of. Of Jacob we have a long detailed history, and the blessing of Isaac belongs to it. It is man, though man with promise, and the patient condescension of God with him, making good His counsels, and after all through faith, but giving us a sad history, though life shines through it. We are still in dealings and providence, that is, government: Simeon and Levi in their cruel wrath do what scatters them in Israel. It is a history of human ways. But further, when Israel gets back to Bethel, in which place

alone he is fully back to God after his compulsory wanderings (and even the idols only then put away), yet kept and preserved—but then when God reveals Himself, we have nothing new of the blessing of the nations in the seed. It is purely Jewish. Rachel, representing the mother of the seed of power in the earth, departs; and he who was the son of her affliction is the son of his father's right hand. Meanwhile God takes care of Jacob and blesses him; but he does not meet God in the place of promise till Bethel, and there clear from all other gods. When he had settled his own place on earth, he had to move away, though there he recognized El as the Elohe-Israel.

In Joseph is the depositary as well as object of the Messianic counsels. He is head among the Jews, supreme as to his personal dignity (the sun and moon are also to bow to him); then the interpreter of the counsels of life and death in his prison, the word of the Lord trying him also; and the knowledge and counsel of the world's condition, so that therein by power all should be reduced under the authority of the throne. After humiliation in righteousness and pardon come exaltation to power: at the right hand of the throne he becomes Lord and has his Gentile wife.

Chapter 130

Philanthropy: Part 1

The desire which originally seduced man from his allegiance to God has been, and is still, strongly marked as the characteristic of his being. “Ye shall be as Gods” was the object proposed by the tempter unto disobedience. And so strong has been the predominance of this principle, that man has used the blessings which God has given to him, and even the very light which He has revealed, in order to assert his own sufficiency and independence. It seems the constant tendency in man to rejoice in the work of His hands; it furnishes him in his own mind with a kind of creative power. It is this which makes the works of man to be the subject of admiration and astonishment, when those of God, so much more wonderful in their kind, and mightier in their degree pass unnoticed or unheeded. Man will put no restraint on himself, as to the means he may use to, compass the end which he so fondly imagines to achieve. He will avail himself of God and the things of God to help in erecting a fabric, which may make him a name in the earth. He will even boast himself of God, in order to establish his own righteousness; and what he calls religion is that which he uses as he would any other scheme, not that to which he himself is subject. Hence it has arisen, that the greatest corruptions in the earth have been brought about by man's abuse of the privileges which God has given him; in other words, by religions corruption. The close of the former dispensation was of this character; even as it is distinctly marked in the prophetic word, that it shall be of this, “in the last days perilous times shall come” (2 Tim. 3).

At the period of the ministry of our Lord among the Jews, it was comparatively a very religions era. The observance of the Passover, and reading the scriptures, had shortly previous to the Babylonish captivity almost gone into desuetude. Thus in the days of Hezekiah, it is said of the Passover, “they had not done it of a long time in such sort as was written;” and when the invitation went forth to summons them of Ephraim and Manasseh to the solemnity at Jerusalem, “they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them” (2 Chron. 30). So again when the copy of the law was found by Hilkiah the priest, in the days of Josiah, “When the king had heard the words of the law, he rent his clothes,” and he sent, “Go, and inquire of the Lord for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this book.” (2 Chron. 34) In the days of our blessed Lord, on the contrary, we find all the set feasts regularly attended, according to the law (Ex. 23:17), and not only did the males go up three times a year to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem, but a great many of the women and children also (Luke 2:41). Scribes and doctors of the law abounded; and there was hardly a town without its synagogue. But however fair this might appear to the eye of man, which saw only the outside, however these might have been adduced as proofs of an increasing love of godliness among the nation, One Who judged not according to appearances, but Who judged righteous judgment, was enabled to detect under all this outward show an apostasy in principle and practice, just ripening unto judgment.

The twenty-third chapter of Matthew's Gospel lifts up the veil, and displays the real state of religion, at a time of so much apparent zeal and activity. There was much regard and outward

reverence shown to the memory of the prophets, who had suffered for their testimony from their forefathers. They built their tombs, and honored the dead and silent witnesses, while the same spirit, which they condemned in their fathers, was about to show itself in a more flagrant manner in their treatment of the then living Witness, to Whom all the prophets had borne witness.

All their zeal about the things of God only tended to make those things subserve their own ends. They did what they did to be seen of men; they compassed sea and land to make a proselyte, in order to glory in his flesh; they would make long prayers, and yet devour widows' houses. They derided the notion of the impossibility of serving God and Mammon; and whilst they contended vehemently for the sanctity of the sabbath, they contrived to evade whatever was onerous in showing that honor to parents which the law of God required. In a word, all their knowledge of God, and all their religions privileges were turned to a selfish account. Man was the end they proposed to themselves, and not the glory of God; whatever thwarted their end was, according to their apprehensions, to be avoided. On every occasion did this religions selfishness show itself, insomuch that even the temple itself was turned into a scene of merchandise. No other moral condition—apparently could have prepared the way for the rejection of Jesus, of Whom they were the betrayers and murderers, when even the heathen governor would have let Him go. Had Jesus been acknowledged, the supremacy of themselves was gone, the notion of man's goodness and competency must be given up; and therefore the language of their heart was, “This is the Heir: come let us slay Him, that the inheritance may be ours.” They professed the good of man to be their object; they did all to have praise of men; and when He came Whose right it was to bless others, and to be honored by them, they received Him not. Such was their philanthropy.

Now the word of God most distinctly marks a declension and apostasy, parallel to this in its leading features, as terminating the present dispensation; only it will be much fairer in its appearance. It is the result of man's using (or rather abasing) the knowledge of God, and of the things of God, to the furtherance of his own scheme of philanthropy. For what is the high sounding title in the lips of man, when weighed in the balance of truth, but this, that “Men shall be lovers of their ownselves”? that man's well-being, according to his own short-sighted view, will become his object? and therefore, that Christianity itself, instead of being self-denying, and hating the life in this world, will only be recognized so far as it can be made to subserve man's self-interest, and to promote his self-exaltation? “They will be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”

The effort of man will be to secure the greatest possible sum of human happiness in the present state—this will be his object. To this will be directed his moral and intellectual powers; to this will his religion be made subservient. Increasing knowledge will mightily increase the power of man, and difficulties may perhaps be surmounted more rapidly than even he can imagine. It is not attempted to be denied that there is something very plausible in such speculations, and very pleasing in the expectations held out. But one might well pause, and ask the reason why such expectations have never been realized? What is there peculiar in the present age to render nugatory the experience of six thousand years? It may be answered, “Christianity is to shed its blessed influence over every institution of man for ameliorating the condition of his species.” Now what is here attempted to be shown is, that this is not the object of Christianity, and that it stands, in this respect, in direct contrast with philanthropy.

When we look at it in its best sense, philanthropy is only remedial; and there is hardly a thing in which it glories that is not so intimately connected with sin, that its glory is only in our shame. It may improve the discipline of prisons, but why are there prisons at all? It may multiply hospitals, but can it prevent sickness? Is it not engaged against a power which is continually asserting its supremacy? For, when one evil is overcome, another rises in its place, like the fable of the hydra. In result, all these prove the inveteracy of the power of evil, from the failure of the wisest and best plans to counteract it. There was one who could say, “I have overcome the world “; but the philanthropist must constantly confess that the world overcomes him And when the evil is looked fairly in the face, and seen in its last and most appalling form—death; what can philanthropy avail against it? It is actually driven, in open defiance of scripture, to look on death as man's natural constitution, instead of as his moral condition on account of sin. And in this instance, we see the boasted goodness of man brought into direct collision with the truth of God. So long as it can use religion for its own end, it will. God will be acknowledged by it, when God can be subjected to it. But the moment its end is interfered with, even by God Himself, then its real exaltation of itself, its insubjection to God, is made manifest.

According to philanthropy the estimate of everything is utility. The language of the heart is, “Who will show us any good”? And as much, very much, of Christianity so evidently tends to the blessing of society, in promoting soberness, righteousness, and temperance; therefore man, in his effort to promote these for his present good, and for his own ends, will boldly say he is forwarding the gospel. He will acknowledge the excellence of the gospel in the very act of subverting its principles. “Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God”? And the same principle might be applied to those who take the standard of utility, instead of that of the will of God. To do so is to get off the ground of faith, and to walk by sight. Faith knows nothing of results; it considers them not; God is its sufficiency and warrant for action and expectation. On the contrary, man proposes a certain scheme, in order to a supposed result, and pursues it by all the means he can muster, and with a singleness of eye and a determinateness of purpose which may well shame the children of light. But what said the Lord in reply to the sneer of the Utilitarians of His day?— “Why was this waste of the ointment made, why not given to the poor”? What was His vindication of the apparently unmeaning action? It was done to Jesus. Faith wrought by love, and a lasting memorial is given to the work of a poor woman, which called forth the scorn of man, whilst the most splendid efforts of philanthropy have perished or been forgotten.

There is something in the description of the coming apostasy in the second Epistle of Peter, and in that of Jude, so fearful and revolting, that we almost shrink from applying it to a religious aura, descriptive of a state of society looked on, and gloried in, as Christian. But the scripture of truth is intended to set appearances in their real light, and the most loathsome comparisons are purposely employed to convey to our minds a sense of the abomination, in the sight of God, which is concealed under the fair show of an outward profession and busy activity. It is hard indeed, until we enter deeply into the working principles of man's mind, to realize the state of Sodom before its destruction, as less guilty and more tolerable than that of the Jewish nation in the time of our Lord; and it does require abiding in Jesus, and walking in the light, to detect under the show of philanthropy the features of an apostasy, marked as the way of Cain, the error of Balaam, and the gainsaying of Borah. But what are these features, but the assertion of the sufficiency of man, the using of the light of God for our own selfish ends, leading to the rejection both of the Priesthood

and Lordship of Jesus?

And let it be calmly asked, if there be a Philanthropical Institution in existence not excluding but acknowledging Christianity in part at least, in which the working of such principles may not more or less be discovered. Nothing indeed is a more striking characteristic of modern philanthropy, than the union of the extremes of faith and opinion, to the exclusion of the mastery of any, as if there were no such thing as truth. This in fact is its boast, the occupation of ground common to all, except the uncompromising Spirit of Christ, which can never really rest, never be healthfully exercised, unless it can claim the ground as its own entirely.

But farther than this, there is something more than the danger of neutrality to be apprehended. Philanthropy, so called, actually invades the province of God, and usurps His place. It is the vain pretense of man to be wiser and better than God in meeting and dealing with evil, and with the misery of man. There is indeed such a thing as real philanthropy; not the experiment of a being under the power of evil to extricate himself or others from that power, or so to mitigate it as to make it tolerable, but the assertion of One, of His sole supremacy over it, in His ability to rescue man from under its power— “the philanthropy of God.” “After that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared (φιλαυθρωπ■α, the philanthropy of God our Savior), not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior; that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3). This is the gracious and noble design of God, the philanthropy of God. He alone knowing the full extent of man's necessity, could devise a plan adequate to meet it. And the extent of the misery and evil of man can only be duly estimated by viewing it as the occasion of the display of the counseled wisdom, power, and goodness of God, in order to its remedy. The object of God is the rescue of man; and when man proposes a similar object to himself, to be compassed by his own powers, he virtually rejects God, and only compasses himself about with his own sparks, in the end to “lie down in sorrow” (Isa. 1:11).

Chapter 131

Philanthropy: Part 2

(Continued from page 204.)

Now, since God's love to man is the very thing set forth in the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ, can that really be worthy to be called love to man, which (even should it obtain what it aims at) leaves him infinitely short of the blessing which God proposes in the gospel? The question is not as to the propriety of meeting man's complicated misery, in order to its relief by any means in our power (this would love be strenuous in doing, even as Jesus went about doing good), but whether the pretension of man to philanthropy, stopping so very short of God's intention in the gospel, is not in its principle virtual infidelity? For when God, out of His love toward man, proposes to Himself one object—and man, out of his love to himself, proposes another object, what is man's persisting in his object but an impeachment of the goodness and wisdom of God? It is thus that man is still guided by the old principle of his seduction, “Ye shall be as gods “; and, making even Christianity subservient to his own aims, he brings in that which is a second and more fearful corruption of the earth (compare Gen. 6:13; Rev. 11:18; 19:2), ending in the judgment of God. Such is the use which “the Christian world” has made, and is making, of those privileges which are indeed great every way. They use them wrongly: patching the new piece to the old garment, and the rent becomes worse, and putting the new wine into old bottles, they burst and the wine is spilled. Christianity loses its distinctiveness, and is only known as a theory of dogmas, instead of a new and active energy; while a morbid and sentimental philanthropy, busy and daring, is substituted in its place. The necessary consequence of this adaptation of Christianity to present circumstances is, that it becomes itself the subject of human expediency, occupying a secondary place, instead of being a dominant principle, bringing everything to its own standard. In attempting to infuse something of the salt into human institutions, it only loses its savor, instead of seasoning that to which it is imparted; and not the grace of God, but the wisdom of man reaps the glory. The world (for example) knows full well how to use Christianity in urging any benevolent work of its own; but it dare not use it in discountenancing covetousness, for this is its own principle: the world loves its own, and such is the basis of almost all human legislation. The philanthropist would seek to infuse something of the spirit of Christianity into a criminal code; but stops short on the one hand, of its intolerance of evil of any kind; and on the other, of passivity as the proper place of a Christian under its pressure.

Christianity is looked upon by men at best as only subsidiary, and, the moment it comes to interfere with convenience, its obligation is denied. Because they may be engaged in promoting the things which are commanded by the precepts and commended by the example of Christ, without the least regarding either their motives or their objects, they conclude they must be right. “Jesus went about doing good;” no human misery was there which did not find His sympathy, and feel His power to meet it. Thousands received blessing from Him, who yet were strangers to eternal life. Ten lepers were cleansed; one only returned to Jesus to give glory to God, and got the further and substantial blessing; “Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole” (Luke 17:19).

When Jesus had healed the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda, and found him afterward in the temple, He said to him, Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more, “lest a worse thing come unto thee.” His philanthropy did not end where man's would, and does end; He saw a worse thing far beyond the measure of the human misery He had remedied. There were yet death and judgment before him, who had been so marvelously delivered; he had yet the blessing to seek which alone belongeth to faith, even deliverance from death and its power, sin. This is the sad mistake of philanthropy: its proposed end, even if attained, stops short of deliverance from “the worse thing.” And therefore, granting all that philanthropy aims at to be accomplished, though this is indeed allowing much; granting that it could say in power to the misery that disfigures society, “Behold, thou art made whole,” the root of the evil remains untouched. Thus, whilst man may be glorying in the success of his efforts, his very success may prove the occasion of blinding him to a sense of his actual state before God—that “the worse thing” is yet before him. It is impossible to say to what extent man's misery may actually be mitigated, or the social system improved, by the mighty powers and resources of man now being developed, and by the use of Christianity itself, as one of the many means to obtain such an end. But experience has hitherto shown, that whilst the surface may be healed, even to the eye of man it is but falsely healed, the wound still festers beneath And just when a goodly fabric has been raised, decked with the fair show of religion by the wisdom of man, it has withered away before the power of some new evil.

But as Christians, we have something more sure than experience (man's utmost certainty), even the testimony of God—that the end of this scheme will be disaster. The gospel is necessarily humanizing and civilizing in its effects; but this is not the real design of God in it. And although it may answer man's end so to use it, he “has his reward” in attaining his object; but still there is the “worse thing” which may befall him; and the very perfecting of his scheme is precisely its ripeness for judgment (Dan. 4:30, 31). It is of solemn importance to realize that God regards the objects at which we aim; if He is aiming at one, and we at another, we cannot be fellow-workers under Him. It is accordingly quite possible to be very busy indeed in religious things, and yet to be quite wide of God's object. The end therefore of such zeal must be disastrous, not attaining to the purpose of God.

Thus it was with Israel, as we read in Rom. 10. They did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God; they used the law for one end, God gave it for another. Thus also is it characteristically marked as to the present dispensation. “To them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality (here their object is marked), eternal life; but to them who are contentious (opposed to enduring and suffering, and marking the way of the world), and do not obey the truth (have not God's object, do not submit to His righteousness) but obey unrighteousness, tribulation, and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil” (Rom. 2).

“God is not mocked, but whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.” He has made known to man, in the gospel of His Son, an available power against evil— “Christ crucified, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” The peace which the gospel gives, and the blessed fruits which it produces, man would fain take if he could to embellish the fabric of his own rearing. Hence every system of religion, which man has attempted to establish, has always had a second object (or rather one besides that of God), which becoming the proximate has had the first share of man's thoughts. To the truth of this we have an unexceptionable witness in Mr. Wesley, who, perceiving the increased symptoms of worldliness among his own followers, appears to have almost

despaired not only of Methodism, but of Christianity itself. “How astonishing a thing” (says he), “is this? How can we understand it? Does it not seem (and yet this cannot be) that Christianity, true scriptural Christianity, has a tendency in process of time to undermine and destroy itself? For wherever true Christianity spreads, it must cause diligence and frugality, which in the natural course of things must beget riches; and riches naturally beget pride, love of the world, and every temper that is destructive of Christianity. Now if there be no way to prevent this, Christianity is inconsistent with itself, and of consequence cannot stand—cannot continue long among any people; since, wherever it generally prevails, it saps its own foundation.”

However true and humbling the fact, that such has been the course of Christianity, is it not clear that God's object in “true scriptural Christianity” was quite overlooked by the holy man who wrote the above? That object is not to make men comfortable in the world, but to give them power to live above it; at the same time that true scriptural Christianity does produce such fruits as must commend themselves to the conscience of man, although he knows not whence they spring. Man sees these, and he seeks them, but not victory over the world. It is on this common ground of the effects of Christianity, righteousness, temperance, that real Christians and speculative philanthropists meet; its neutrality at once shows it to be ground on which a Christian ought not to be. “He that is not with Me is against Me;” and wherever a Christian, on the principle of his association, cannot confess Christ, he is clearly off the ground of faith.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 132

Philanthropy: Part 3

(Continued from page 219.)

It must doubtless have excited the attention of even the careless observer, that this is a day marked, not only by the wonderful development of man's power and resources, but by many a busy and active philanthropic scheme. I enter not into them, only seeking to point out the ground which they take as unsafe for the believer, in fact, helping to consummate the apostasy. The end proposed by man is, the blessing of his species; to this end all means are to be rendered subservient—Legislation, Science, Machinery, Education, Christianity. Now it is manifest, that the three first can only affect the present state of man; and although the two last may have an onward and future aspect, they may not be used as such, but at the best for man's moral and intellectual improvement. Now in the estimation of God, the condition of man before Him is so bad, that it is absolutely irremediable. Every experiment of God on man (to speak after the manner of men) has failed; and, instead of improving, has only tended to develop successively and increasingly the weakness and perverseness of man.

Hence the end of God's philanthropy as revealed in His word, is salvation, deliverance out of such a state as this altogether, and not the improvement of it. “According to His mercy He saved us,” not only in reference to man's lack of claim on Him, but in reference to the greatness and kind of the salvation itself which could never have entered into the thought of the creature. As the starting point, the worthlessness of man is acknowledged; the cross is God's estimate of the flesh, i.e., man as he is: all this faith recognizes. “By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost—here is the manner of the salvation; not the improvement of anything old, but the introduction of a new existence; the bringing out of that family, whose inheritance is sin and death, into union with the Head of another family, from whom flow Spirit and Life. It is a new life—life out of death—anew in its origin, its objects, and desires, and requiring an aliment peculiar to itself—the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Thus the inheritance is not that of sin and sorrow, but of eternal life.

Now, unless we start from the same point as God, and have the same object in view, all our attempts will end in disappointment and disaster. The starting point with God is the irremediable evil of man; and the remedy a new one, even resurrection-life. It is Jesus and the resurrection which is to be preached, as the only adequate remedy. To take, therefore, either a more favorable view of the present constitution of man than God does, or to propose any remedy short of the resurrection to meet it (dignify it with whatever name we may), is only to deceive ourselves through false philosophy. Our blessed Lord clearly saw what expectations man would form as to the result of His wondrous love and condescension, in coming into such a world as this. They would look for so great an amelioration in the condition of man, as to make the present state one of possible, if not of probable, enjoyment. But how completely does He nullify any such expectation” Suppose ye, that I am come to give peace on earth?” (Luke 12:51). Such would be the necessary consequence of the introduction of a new life Had it been merely an improvement of the old life, it

would have been borne, and bailed as a blessing by man; for all men naturally allow to a consistent Christian an advance on them in degree, but not a difference from them in kind. But the new life comes into direct collision with the old, and must cause necessary discomfort here, and be, in its exercise, a continual course of self-denial—a hating of our lives in this world.

Now the end which philanthropy proposes, is confessedly nothing beyond the improvement of the old life; and it is not now my purpose to urge farther the failure of such an attempt, but rather to she w the necessary collision into which philanthropy and Christianity must come; in other words, that the way of God and the way of man to meet evil, not coinciding, must issue in conflict; and that one trial of the faith of the disciples of Christ will arise from philanthropy. Everything is now rapidly tending to the concentration of the powers of man against the evil of his condition; the barriers of ages which appear hitherto to have prevented the full exercise of these powers, are falling before them one after another, and a fair field seems opening to man for the experiment of the regeneration of his species.

Now, whilst Christianity may lend its aid to further this scheme, it will be tolerated, praised, and caressed; but the moment Christians assert their own principles, and stand on their own ground, that is, the resurrection, it will cast such shame and contempt on the efforts of philanthropy, as to be esteemed an enemy and a hindrance in its way. Whilst man is working to his end, God assuredly is to His; and that is to bring out His own into separateness from everything foreign to them; and this is no less evident to him who can judge all things, than the movement of the spirit of the age in philanthropical schemes. At this very day we see this work of God's Spirit among Christians, so as to cause dissatisfaction with all around them; and although we be slow in distinguishing His leadings, and are liable to the seductions of error, yet the result is the desire awakened of occupying our own ground according to scripture, and standing simply on the Lord's side.

Chapter 133

Philanthropy: Part 4

(Concluded from p. 233.)

Viewed in the light of God's truth, philanthropy is the minding the things of the flesh. Give it all the success to which it aspires, grant it all its usefulness, death ends all its efforts: to mind the things of the flesh is death. Here it is that the reality of Christianity begins, where philanthropy ends. It starts from death onto life: to mind things of the Spirit is life and peace. Hence where real Christianity as an active living energy is exhibited, it necessarily must thwart, however unobtrusive in itself, the vain and impotent effort of man to better the condition of his species by schemes of his own devising. The time may come when men will even think they are doing God service in slaying the real disciples of Christ; for these alone will appear to stand in the way of the perfection of that system, which man would fain raise as a monument of his own greatness.

It appears to me that the separation of the two great principles of the gospel, justification by Christ; and life in the Spirit—in other words, Jesus and the Resurrection—has given rise to a most unhealthy state of things; either leaving professed believers in practical ungodliness, or encouraging a morbid sentimentality, in either case justifying worldliness. The distinction between flesh and Spirit has often been held in justification of sin; the cross being gloried in only selfishly, and not realized in its moral power of crucifying the world unto us, and as our power too against the dominance of sin. On the other hand, those who have most systematically contended for the Spirit, have but owned it as a higher influence, working on the mind unto a certain indescribable sentiment called spirituality, but only tending to form an inner circle of worldliness, where the excrescences that offend reason or morality may be lopped off. But Christianity with them is mere sentiment; and when so called evangelicalism is professed, it answers, for the most part, to the stony-ground hearers. The truths of Christianity are brought to work on the natural affections, causing excitement and busy activity, but giving no peace, no victory, no stability: in time of trial on account of the word, they fall away. Now these last are most forward in schemes simply philanthropical.

Now the scriptures set before us flesh and Spirit as two distinct departments conversant with different subjects. Wide indeed is the range of flesh, all the phenomena of man's constitution, and the world around him, that which meets the eye; but it is bounded: the things which are seen are temporal, and death is their end, or at least separates us from them. On the other hand, vast is the range of the Spirit; they are things which “eye hath not seen “; all the realities revealed to faith, and opening a field for the exercise of an enlightened understanding. It is true indeed, that the works of God, and His ways in providence, will be an object of interest to the Spirit (for the spiritual man examines all things, though the flesh cannot intrude into its department, 1 Cor. 2:14). But the difference will be, that they will be looked on as declaring the glory of God; and the flowers of the field will so much display it, that all the glory of Solomon, yea all the achievements of men, will sink into obscurity. The natural man rejoices in the works of his hands—the spiritual in the works of God. “The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein” (Psa.

111:2).

These two departments, therefore, have their definite tendencies, death and life. Hence the great practical power of a believer to live above present things in his conversance with those of a higher range. “Live in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” But to mind the things of the flesh is enmity against God. It is to occupy the field that He has given up to judgment—to say that we can better it, after He was rejected Who had all blessing in His hand. It is to try the miserable experiment of getting good out of those very things which crucified the Lord of glory. The friendship of the world is enmity with God. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” All that is in the world passeth away. He alone that doeth the will of God, walking with Him in unity of object and purpose, abideth forever. Everything now is finding its place; and may the Lord's people know theirs to be, that they, being risen with Christ, may seek and mind the things above, and be content to be expectants for real and abiding good, till Christ Who is their Life shall be manifested, and then they shall be perfectly conformed to Him, the second Man, the Lord from heaven, Head of the new creation, where there shall be no more curse, or sorrow, or death.

Chapter 134

Philemon: Introduction

This letter, an appendix to the Pastoral Epistles, has a character of its own; so much so, that those whose mania it has been to doubt its genuineness as an inspired communication of the apostle have without difficulty put together some slight appearances on which to build their destructive argument. Indeed Dr. Ellicott, I see, does not include the letter to Philemon, but gives those only to Timothy and Titus as the Pastoral Epistles; and in this he does not differ from others. Nevertheless, allowing a marked difference, it is their beautiful complement and follows them so naturally that we may without violence class them together, rather than leave this letter absolutely isolated.

But peculiarities there could not but be in a document so distinct from the governing instructions given to Paul's fellow-laborers in their general work of superintendence. For the subject-matter before us is the opposite side of gracious care, in a matter of domestic life. Divine love actively applies itself, in a manner essentially its own, to the case of a runaway slave from Colossi who had been brought to God through the apostle daring his first imprisonment in Rome. For the date of this Epistle is at least as certain as that of the Second to Timothy, which was the latest of the apostle's writings, just before his imminent death that closed his second imprisonment in the great metropolis: a date, as all know, far more defined than that of the First Epistle to Timothy or of the letter to Titus. It was written, generally speaking, about the same time as those to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, as well as to the Philippians.

It is clear too from a comparison of the apostolic statements that Colossi in Phrygia was the city wherein lived Philemon, Archippus (it would seem) being an inmate of his house. Nor was this all that characterized it. As there was one assembly in the house of Nymphas the Laodicean, though we hear of the assembly of Laodiceans, so we read of the assembly in Philemon's house, though there was the assembly of the Colossians besides. All the saints composed the assembly in that locality; yet this in no way forbade, but well consisted with, the assembly in this house or in that.

The simple believer may wonder that it should be necessary to insist on what is so plain an inference from Col. 4:9, 17 compared with our Epistle, that Philemon, and Onesimus of course, as well as Archippus, resided in Colossi. Yet Grotius (Annott. in V. et N. Test. in loco) will have it that Philemon was not only an inhabitant of Ephesus, but an elder or bishop of the church there. And of late Wieseler contends that Philemon and the others belonged to Laodicea! Is it worth while to expose the feeble and false reasoning put forth in support of such strange suppositions? It is probable indeed, as the apostle had not visited Colossi or Laodicea before he wrote his Epistle to the former (ch. 2:1), that Philemon may have heard and received the truth at Ephesus (Acts 19:10); he was certainly indebted to the apostle for his conversion (Philem. 1:19). But “fellow-worker” is much too general a word to bear the construction that Philemon was set apart to the charge either of presbyter or of deacon. He labored in the truth, he cared for the saints; and the apostle owned him as his joint-workman, just as later still the apostle John acknowledged Gains (3rd Epistle 5-8) on grounds at least as broad. Whatever the character of his work, it is undefined

in an Epistle which from its nature does not set forth official distinction for the apostle himself, nor for Archippus, though we know from Col. 4:17 that the latter had a distinct ministry in the Lord which he was exhorted to fulfill. In our Epistle however the Holy Spirit for the wisest and best reasons would have all to be on the footing of grace.

This then is the key-note. The apostle acts in a practical way on the incomparable grace of Christ. It is not merely that God despises not any, or that human compassion flows out toward the misery of one's fellow, even if a slave, or so much the more because he was. There is the finest and liveliest field for the affections; but the spring is from above, and the power is in the Holy Spirit, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, Whose is the glory and the dominion unto the ages of the ages. The title of the master is frankly admitted not only by Peal in word but also by the returning slave in deed. There is no glossing over the wrong done. Whatever was due positively or negatively, Paul will have set to his account and becomes absolutely responsible for all. For true grace never enfeebles law nor shirks righteousness, but on the contrary establishes it, while it rises far above and flows out freely and immeasurably beyond.

The great reality of Christ fills the apostle's heart, as it habitually did. The providence of God directed the feet of the fugitive to Rome, where detection was hardest for one so insignificant in the midst of a vast population with extremes of grandeur and degradation, wealth and penury, yet even the lowest not without mortification lavished on them from the lords of the world, sinking to utter ruin through sinful pleasures and systematic selfishness which enervated all far more than they satisfied any. There through whatever motive led, or possibly without one, the grace of God gave Onesimus to hear Paul and to believe the gospel. It became his joy to serve the apostle, specially in his sufferings for Christ and the gospel's sake; but a single eye to Christ lays on his heart the earthly master he had wronged. He feels bound, and the gospel beyond all fortified his sense of the obligation, to return to his master at all cost, and be the consequences what they might. And the apostle, whatever his love to his son in the gospel, whatever his value for the services of love then rendered and acceptable, whatever his pity for one whose misconduct had exposed him to severe punishment for his own wrong and as an example to others, was led of the Spirit to write this Epistle instinct with the grace of the gospel from the first line to the last, as may be shown more clearly in weighing its every word.

It has been termed “the polite Epistle,” I cannot say with great propriety, though it be quite true that those who pique themselves most on their nice sense of honor and courtesy, of tact and courage, prudence and friendship, purity and tenderness, must feel themselves in the presence of what exceeds not their experience only but their ideal. It is not “the gentleman” that stands revealed in the Epistle, but “the Christian"; and this not in theory or exhortation only but in living reality; that we, having the same Christ and the same Spirit, may by grace make the same divine word good ourselves, and so commend this scripture all the more to others. It is in all round the exercise of divine life, which the Holy Spirit promotes, growing out of a mere domestic question calculated without Christ to provoke anger, or to be condoned in condescending good nature and self-complacency.

Doddridge seems to have been the first to suggest the comparison of Pliny the younger's letter to Sabinianus (9:21), not merely the brief sequel of thanks which Alford cites (9:24): models, both of them, of fine natural sentiments expressed with beauty, terseness and force, as became a refined

Roman of ability and rank writing to conciliate an intimate friend with his freedman who had offended and been discarded. In the heathen, as we might expect, nothing rises above self; in the Christian it is the love of Christ drawn out on behalf of one brought to God from the depths of sin and wretchedness, whose conscience prompted a return to his master armed with authority to punish his delinquency; but that master a Christian dear to the apostle not only for other things but for his habitually gracious bearing to the saints. Him Paul therefore would not only guard from the impulses of nature and from the jealous exercise of legal rights as a man of the world, but would lead into the communion of Christ's love in a case where it was readily liable to be overlooked. He would have him show “the kindness of God,” like the man after God's heart in the O. T. to the family of his enemy, where a ground of love and truth presented itself. And was there not a better ground here, where by sovereign grace Onesimus was in Christ as truly as Philemon? And did not Philemon rejoice to have the opportunity of being “an imitator of God “; as the apostle was about that time inculcating on the Ephesian faithful to walk in love, even as Christ also loved and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell? How he pleads like Christ our Advocate in the face of sin on our part will appear in the details of the Epistle.

Notice now with what address the apostle brings in the sister wife, and the service of Archippus, as well as the assembly in Philemon's house; that love might be the more strengthened severally and together, and the head of the house be led in the way of grace, not by constraint from without or within, but of a ready mind, according to God.

Chapter 135

Philemon 8-16

We come here to the immediate object of the Epistle, for which the introduction so admirably prepares the way. Would Philemon now swerve through pre-occupation with his rights or the influence of worldly feeling and practice, from that practical grace, which had filled the apostle with so, much the more joy because the hearts of the saints had been refreshed by him? Was the relationship of “brother” henceforth to lose its value in his eyes? This certainly the apostle did not anticipate, but counted on the triumph of divine love.

“Wherefore, having much boldness to enjoin thee what is befitting, for love's sake I rather entreat, being such a one as Paul aged and now also prisoner of Christ Jesus. I entreat thee for my child whom I begot in bonds, Onesimus, the once unprofitable to thee but now profitable both to thee and to me; whom I send back to thee, in person, that is, my bowels; whom I could wish to have kept with myself, that for thee he might minister to me in the bonds of the gospel. But without thy mind I would do nothing, that thy good might not be as of necessity but of willingness. For perhaps he was therefore parted for a time that thou mightest have him forever, no longer as a bondman, but above a bondman, a brother beloved, specially to me but how much rather to thee, both in [the] flesh and in [the] Lord” (ver. 8-16).

It is one of the peculiar and mightiest characteristics of the gospel with which the apostle here makes the appeal: the assertion of a title, true, just, and indisputable, which he none the less foregoes in order to have full and free scope for grace in the one appealed to. So Christ lived, moved, and had His being here below; so did He most impressively lead His own into that mind which they are called evermore by faith to possess and represent every day. Hear Him (Matt. 17) anticipating Peter, who had been quick to assure the half-shekel collectors of his Master's readiness to pay like a staunch Jew. “What thinkest thou, Simon? The kings of the earth, from whom do they receive custom or tribute? from their sons or from strangers? And when he said, From strangers, Jesus said, Therefore are the sons free. But lest we cause them to stumble, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a stater (== a shekel): that take and give to them for Me and for thee.”

Undoubtedly the law had a direct claim on every son of Israel. But had not Simon only a little before confessed Jesus to be Son of the living God? and later still, when he would hastily have put Moses and Elijah on a level with Him, dazzled by the glory of the kingdom, had he not been corrected, by the Father owning Him as His beloved Son, the One now to be heard? All this was from the time when in view of His sufferings and the glories that should follow He forbade the disciples tell any man that He was the Messiah. The mighty change was at hand the larger and heavenly glory founded on His death; entailing on His own similar rejection meanwhile till God vindicate His glory publicly at His return.

How blessedly the practical fruit appears in our Lord! He leads on Peter from Jewish thoughts into His mind ere long to stamp him in word and deed. By his confession “the sons” of the king “are

free;" and Son He confessedly was in His own right, as we become by grace through His redemption brought to His Father and our Father, His God and our God. This lifts the Christian therefore above all thoughts Jewish or Gentile. "But lest we cause them to stumble, go" &c. And thereon follows a most strikingly suitable miracle attesting His divine power, as His anticipation of Peter did His divine knowledge: a fish obeys its Creator and furnishes in its mouth the precise sum required of those under the law, which Peter was to pay for the Master as well as for himself It is grace in every way flowing from infinite glory, but this in the humiliation and obedience of a man, for the present insisting on none of His rights, but associating believers in His own relationship as far as this could be, as well as in His lowly ways here below.

It was in this spirit the apostle wrote, "Wherefore, having much boldness in Christ to enjoin on thee what is befitting, for love's sake I rather entreat (or exhort)." To command what is right is certainly not wrong in one possessed of due authority. But grace, while it respects law in its own sphere, acts incomparably above law in a sphere of its own, of which Christ is the center and the fullness, the object, pattern, and motive. The apostle therefore, whatever the rights of his position and this even "in Christ," puts love forward, and thus only beseeches one who like himself realized his incalculable debt to the love of God in Christ our Lord. Nor this only; he brings in connection with his entreaty the affecting circumstances of himself, Paul, an old man and bondman or slave of Christ Jesus. He entreats for his child, for such was the runaway no less than Timothy. He adds whom he begot in his bonds; and this, which could not be said of Timothy, was not written without purpose for Philemon's heart who could not say as much of himself either.

But if he speaks thus touchingly on behalf of Onesimus, he does not refrain from allowing his altogether unsatisfactory past conduct,: "Onesimus, that was once to thee unprofitable, but now to thee and to me profitable." He had found the Lord; he was brought to God, and was His child, not merely Paul's. What more could Philemon ask as a guarantee of serviceableness? If he thought of himself as an injured master, on the one hand, and on the other of the ingratitude and every other wrong of Onesimus, irritation might be natural, as well as justice and a warning pleaded; but if the grace that is in Christ Jesus could not but be recalled by the apostle's words to Philemon, was he to be in unison with Christ or discordant? This question, though not formally asked, could not really be evaded. The Christian is here to reflect Christ. This is to be his daily walk, his greatest business.

Not that the apostle had forgotten the title of the master over his slave: "Whom I send back to thee" (ver. 11). Our idiom can hardly bear "I sent "; so in ver. 19 we must say, "I write." It is the epistolary aorist, as they call it, the writer going on to the time of reading. Philemon was thus reinstated; Onesimus returned to his master; the apostle sent him back. He did not write a letter to secure terms for the slave beforehand, nor to make a bargain with the master. If this could scarce be according to the law, still less would it answer to the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. He sends Onesimus back "in person, that is, mine own bowels," or my very heart! Is not this the mind of heaven? Yea, rather it is to live Christ. Wondrous to say, heaven looked down to Christ on earth to find such a display of love for the worthless as heaven itself could not furnish. And now it was for Philemon to prove the ground of his heart and the simplicity of his faith. Love me, love my dog, say men. The apostle says of Onesimus, He is my very heart. I Could such an one be a light object to Philemon? Assuredly Christ, the unchanging One, changes all things; and the ignoble things of the world, and the despised did God choose, and the things that are not, that He might bring to

naught the things that are; so that no flesh should boast before God. “But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus Who was made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” If the gospel be true, as there was no difference in that all sinned, so there is none in the great salvation. Onesimus, Philemon, Paul are alike blessed perfectly. Was Philemon insensible to grace so unspeakable, so unthinkable, yet most real and sure?

Nor does the apostle's advocacy stop even here. “Whom I could wish to have kept with myself, that for thee (or, in thy behalf) he might minister to me in the bonds of the gospel; but without thy mind I would do nothing that the good might not be as of necessity but of willingness” (ver. 13, 14). Love is of God, but it is always holy and always free; and therefore was the advocate sensitively careful that all should flow through Philemon's heart under the action of the Spirit to Christ's honor. His grace had been magnified in the slave: could he look for aught else in the master? Whatever might be his need as a prisoner for Christ, whatever his appreciation of the service of love; he looks for it from Philemon no less than in Onesimus.

And what can be finer than the simple yet deep and true suggestion that follows? “For perhaps he therefore was parted for a time, that thou mightest have him forever, no more as a bondman but above a bondman, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord” (ver. 15, 16). Words these are, weighty words of love that will never die, not sentimental, nor the play of a lively mind, still less the expression of dignified self-complacency in condescension, but the outpouring of a heart constrained by the love of Christ; the privilege of which it is in a world of sin and selfishness and death, not only to view things on the side of God, but to share that love which, by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, enables those that live of His life to live no longer to themselves but to Him Who for them died and rose again.

Thus could the apostle interpret the otherwise unworthy escapade of Onesimus; and yet he adds a delicate “perhaps” if he might, as he trusted, carry along Philemon with himself. Some of us know the brutality of Roman or Greek masters in such cases; and it has not been at all peculiar to those places and times. But the Christian may and ought to see things in the light and love and interests of Christ. Thus he does not even say that Onesimus departed, but “perhaps for this reason he was parted for a time, that thou mightest have him fully (■π■χ■ς) forever.” And truly the Christian tie is not temporary but everlasting. Had Onesimus served ever so faithfully and without the least interval of desertion, after all a heathen could have no link with a Christian beyond the things that perish. But in the admirable grace of God, the poor heathen slave had, in his separation from the household to which he belonged, heard the voice of Christ and returned, that Philemon might have him as never before, no longer as a bondman (though bondman he was and he would be the last to dispute the fact), but above a bondman through the Son of God Who became a bondman to make him His freedman, yea a brother beloved, as Paul assured and Philemon would rejoice to learn: a brother beloved, specially to me, says the apostle, whom God employed in that work of His love for eternity, yet now and here to be testified, that others may heed the same call, and, if believing, enter into the same blessing. For there are open arms on Christ's part, and God is glorified thereby, and heaven rejoices therein, whatever be the scorn and enmity of a lost race rushing away from God heedlessly, under the guidance of a rebel mightier than themselves, whose power and wiles are the deadlier the more they are ignored.

A brother beloved, says the apostle, “specially to me,” of all outside Philemon; for the tie was intimate and most dear to him who begot him, and in bonds too. Yet he adds “but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord.” For Philemon had known him habitually and stood in a relationship of nearness, which the apostle still recognizes (“in the flesh”), whilst he asserts a new one (“in the Lord”) which can never grow old.

How blessed is that grace of God, which in the cross condemned sin far more deeply than law ever did or could, yet has reached to us in our lowest state to seat us far above princes, yea, or principalities and powers; for by the Spirit we are one with Christ Himself on the throne of God. Yet is it the only principle that has power to keep everything in its place, after having put them there. The grace that conciliates a runaway slave with his master is the same, which, only in a deeper form and way, conciliates a sinner with God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is grace too which maintains love amidst and above all provocations and injuries. It is grace which hinders salvation from turning to pride of heart and licentiousness of walk. Without it man would pervert the gospel into a cloak of maliciousness and make the church of God a scene of democratic leveling and socialistic robbery.

By grace all Christians are brethren; but by the same grace God set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, &c.: every one we may say in his own order, but as it pleased Him. And as the Christian slave is Christ's freedman, so the Christian master is glad to awn himself Christ's bondman. To ground Christian privilege on the rights of man is to deny the grace of God, and can end only in the worst lawlessness. It is our blessedness to be ever dependent on God, as Christ was; to receive all from His hand, and have the bitterest things thus made sweet. Thus is our lot best maintained, when most forlorn; and the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, a goodly heritage; whereas all otherwise must fill the heart with dreariness and disappointment.

Chapter 136

Philemon 17-25

The courtesy of the apostle's appeal is as striking as the deep ground of grace on which all is based, as ought to be in the dealings of saints one with another. The circumstances of the case we have seen enhanced this. For on the one hand the wrong done by Onesimus was great and manifest, and denied by none, least of all by himself or the blessed apostle. On the other hand, grace had wrought savingly and therefore with fruit of righteousness and peace in the returned runaway. God had intervened after the offense, not merely giving repentance and remission of sins through His Son, but as ever along with that boon the positive gift of eternal life and of the Holy Spirit. As one who had believed in God, and been justified by His grace, Onesimus came to place himself unreservedly in his master's hands, animated and strengthened doubtless to this by the apostolic instrument of divine blessing, who was no less jealous that divine grace might work as fully and freely in Philemon's heart. Believing masters and bondmen are alike debtors to grace, alike responsible to see to it that they pay diligent attention to good works. And the best of all works is to answer practically in spirit, word and deed, to the gracious Master of us all, whether free or bond.

To represent Christ's goodness aright in his ways is the daily problem that each Christian has to solve. Does it not demand grace every hour? Unquestionably; but did not His love provide for every need from the start? “Of His fullness we all received, and grace for grace.” But is not present and continual dependence needed? Beyond doubt: else the gift of abounding grace would make us independent of God, the greatest dishonor of Christ, the deepest shame of a Christian. Through Christ we have got and possess (■σχ■καμεν) the access by faith into this grace wherein we stand. It is a constant place of favor before Him as children of God, in pointed contrast with the most favored sons, not of Adam merely, but of Israel under the law with its necessary effect of bondage gendering fear of condemnation and death; but the fullness of grace possessed and known is only the more to draw out the clinging to grace, and wither up self-confidence, for every duty, for every call of love, hour by hour. Hence the word is, Thou therefore, my child (as the apostle impressed on another blessed by his means), be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 2:1). It is there for us, but we always need to wait on Him for it. Dependence on and confidence in Him are the sinews of obedience. Otherwise we fail and have none justly to blame but ourselves for slighting that grace to which we owe everything boast, if indeed we may boast save in Christ and His cross, its deepest proof and most wondrous display.

With this sense of grace filling his own heart the apostle says, “If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as me. But if he wronged thee or oweth thee aught, put this to my account: I Paul write with mine own hand, I will repay; that I say not to thee that thou owest besides even thine own self. Yea, brother, let me have profit of thee in [the] Lord; refresh my bowels in Christ” (ver. 17-20).

These are burning words of the love that never fails; for it has its spring in God Himself; and Christ, as He was Himself the fullness of it, and not a mere stream or emanation, so has He made it to spring up in us who believe, and to flow out as rivers of living water. It is inseparable from the Holy

Ghost given to us, Who energizes as the first man is judged that the Second may be magnified in us, as He is glorified on high.

And what did not Philemon feel, when he heard words which we may readily conceive he had never had addressed to him, as no occasion had occurred to draw them forth, though the same love was always there? It was not a magnate but a slave, once worthless and guilty, now the everlasting object of the love of Christ which stirred the depths of the apostle's heart, who in his turn would kindle the holiest affections of Philemon as never before. Yet to be Paul's imitator as he was of Christ had evidently been the saintly ambition of Philemon hitherto; and Paul would have it fired with fresh zeal now. “If thou holdest me [not an imitator only, great as this honor was, but] a partner.” What! Philemon reckon the great apostle partner with him! It was even so he read with his own eyes and from the apostle's own hand. It hung, it is true, on his receiving Onesimus, nay far more than this, on his receiving Onesimus as Paul! “Receive him as me.", O the wonders of grace! Receive the repentant runaway slave as the apostle! Yet if grace had its way, could it be adequately otherwise? What men, still worthless and children of wrath, falsely claim throughout Christendom to the shame of faith, the gospel, and Christ Himself given, Onesimus was in truth a child of God and a member of Christ. This the others are not, by any scriptural judgment however charitable, though they may be tares in the kingdom of heaven; for certainly they are not wheat. And charity would not bolster up false hopes, but warn them of judgment while preaching to them the grace of God in Christ if peradventure they might believe and be saved ere it be too late.

The poorest Christian, once the most depraved or guilty of men, is in Christ no less than the greatest of apostles. Of one as much as another is it written by another apostle: “Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because even as He is, even so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). It is not sentiment nor exaggeration, but the wondrous yet sober and certain truth. Onesimus even then was in virtue of God's love in Christ perfected, as Christ Himself in His eyes, and therefore to the eye and heart of faith. So it was with Paul; and so he would have it with Philemon.

And what more consummate than the address of his advocacy? What we love intensely we strive to do best; and here the Holy Spirit inspired all infallibly. “But if he wronged or oweth thee aught, this put to my account: I Paul write with mine own hand, I will repay; that I say not to thee, that thou. owest besides even thyself to me.” Could appeal of love be more irresistible? Grace does not, could not, deny the evils it forgives; even law does not condemn the sinner comparably with the condemnation of sin (root, as well as branch and fruit) in the cross of Christ. Grace proves sin to be so hopelessly bad that only God sending His own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin [i.e., as a sacrifice for it], could surmount the otherwise impossibility (τ■ ■δ■νατον το■ ν■μου). But evil has been perfectly met in the cross, and God there glorified even as to sin in the suffering Son of man; so that even righteousness has only the happy task of pronouncing the justification of them that believe.

How without effort the apostle breathes and speaks nothing but grace, and grace reigning through righteousness! “If he wronged or owed thee aught, put this to my account.” Would Philemon answer in a spirit of law or grace? Were he indeed as merciless as the servant in the parable which closes Matt. 18, Paul stands forth with repeated personal emphasis in the spirit of substitution: “I Paul write with mine own hand, I will repay.” But he will not let Philemon go even

here without a loving (certainly not a Parthian) arrow, however effectual, “That I say not to thee, how thou owest besides even thyself to me,” Here was a debt indeed, which Philemon would be the last to forget or to underestimate. And if the apostle had not reminded him before, as may well be doubted, he does not fail to allude now to good purpose however passingly. Even to say a word was more than enough for the heart of so good a man, in presence of a debt that never could be paid. What in comparison was any bad debt on the score of the poor slave? Philemon owed, gladly owed, himself to Paul. And all this is wound up by the touching close of this appeal: “Yea, brother, let me have profit of thee in [the] Lord: refresh my bowels in Christ.” As he began so tellingly with “brother” in ver. 7, so not less does he reiterate it here in ver. 20. It was not in vain for Philemon; it was earnest love, not condescension. The gain that he yearned after was Philemon's yet more than his own, without telling him so. Grace on his part in presence of the present need and all past provocation would be the most balmy refreshment to the wounds and sufferings of the aged apostle. Selfishness was excluded. All he sought was in the Lord—in Christ. Then the quality is never strained, and the blessing threefold. May we know, enjoy, and manifest it, for whom these undying words of God are given which were primarily addressed to Philemon and those concerned.

There is a beautiful supplement, by no means unconnected in purpose with the direct appeal now concluded, which we do well to ponder. “Having confidence of thine obedience I write to thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say. But withal prepare me also a lodging; for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted to you” (ver. 21, 22). Comparing this with Col. 4:9 where Onesimus is introduced to the Colossian brethren in the most formal manner as “the faithful and beloved brother who is [one] of you,” I think he is not mistaken who infers that the apostle looked for more in the transformed bondman than a simple saint; and that he was therefore the more urgent for a new triumph of grace in Philemon, not only in taking back to his heart the wrong-doer, but in setting him free. Bondage could not annul that liberty wherewith Christ delivers; but if called to serve the Lord, in the gospel for instance, the circumstances of slavery must hinder activity not a little. The apostle does but hint at more than he said: Philemon, as well as the rest, and not least Apphia, would easily see more and correctly; for love divine love at least gives sharp discerning eyes. The apostle's announced visit too would not hinder all be desired for Onesimus, uttered or unexpressed. The lodging might be outside or within the house of Philemon, the language being purposely vague, the intent that nothing should be by constraint, but of a willing mind. The prayers of the saints then are sought as ever; for the apostle says no more than “I hope.” Prayers would help on more than his coming.

The salutations follow, which include with one omission several names that appear in the Epistle to the Colossians written and sent at the same time. Yet are there instructive differences to be noted. Here Epaphras takes the first place, as Aristarchus the Thessalonian in the longer Epistle; yet there Epaphras has much fuller mention, and such as would endear him to the Colossians. “Epaphras, my fellow-captive in Christ Jesus, saluteth thee; Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers” (ver. 23, 24). It is not “fellow-soldier,” as said of Archippus in ver. 2, an expression applied to Epaphroditus in Phil. 2:25, and best illustrated by the “soldier” of Christ Jesus in 2 Tim. 2. It is not exactly δ■σμιος, “prisoner,” as Paul speaks of himself in this and in other Epistles. Nor have we sufficient reason to say that Andronicus, Junias, and Epaphras were literally bound in a chain as the apostle was for Christ's sake. Yet is it a word of force, and means a captive, or war

prisoner. Certainly we hear of no external event in the conflicts of the gospel that furnishes a ground for such a title. Meyer after Fritzsche suggests the idea that certain of the apostle's companions voluntarily shared his prison by turns: and that it was the turn of Aristarchus when he was writing to the Colossians, of Epaphras when he wrote to Philemon. By this he would explain why Aristarchus is here συνεργ■ς and there συναιχμ■λωτος, whilst Epaphras is there σ■νεργ■ς and here συναιχμ■λωτος. This is ingenious no doubt; but Rom. 16:7 presents no small difficulty to receiving it.

Mark follows next, the first of those called simply “fellow-workers.” There is no such introduction of him as to the Colossians. Nor was it called for here as it was there, and in 2 Tim. 4 also, where the apostle confirms to the end a restoration of confidence referred to those in Colossae, in accordance with injunctions previously received.

The omitted name of “Jesus that was called Justus” was honored enough by the mention in Col. 4:11. There was no need of sending to Philemon the salutation of one so little known. Then cornea Aristarchus, of whom enough has been remarked already, followed by Demas, who appears in Col. 4:14 without a word: a preparation in God's mind, it would seem, for a sadder mention in 2 Tim. 4:10. Luke, styled “the beloved physician” in Col. 4:14, here comes the last named of the fellow-workers: a clear proof that the order in no way marks, as men do, the spiritual value or the honorable rank of those brought before us.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit” (ver. 25) is the final greeting of the apostle to them all. This is in the exactest keeping with the Epistle. It is the answer on the practical side (and what is the good of truth in which we do not live and walk?) to grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. The apostle does not fail to wish it to all saints, and in every Epistle of his, great or small. It may be more or less enlarged or abridged in its form; but it is found at the bottom everywhere; and in none is the wish more seasonable than here.

Positivism

Christ is the truth, nor is there any way to the Father but Himself. To Christ the Spirit is the living witness in chief and the sole power of making all the written word divinely available.

Till the soul is thus at rest in Christ, and satisfied with Him, it is dangerous to occupy oneself with error. Indeed, as an indulgence of curiosity, it is never safe; it becomes profitable only as a duty. In this spirit we would introduce Mr. Arthur's volume to readers not likely otherwise to hear of it, as a handling of this scheme, and withal religion! no less interesting than thorough, and ever.) where characterized by the fear of God. Those who know of a call for its help in days when skepticism ensnares alike the old and young will be thankful to have the book brought before them. A few extracts will suffice to prove its ability and attractiveness, especially when we take into consideration the low and debasing nature of the evil which it seeks to expose and overthrow. Mr. A. wisely leaves behind for his authority the introduction and specious arguments of English apologists, and goes direct to the oracles of Auguste Comte, whose writings he has fully and carefully studied. Cougreve, Lewes, Mill, and Miss Martineau, shirk somewhat the deliverances of their high priest in the religion of humanity. Comte himself seems unhesitating, and not the less doubtless because, however clever, he was crazy, and once or twice in his life actually deranged. He was an intensely narrow-minded Frenchman, who judged of Christianity by Gallican Popery, and, because the French as a nation believe not, counted the gospel obsolete and ready to vanish away.

Comte eliminated all belief in spiritual existence; God or devil, angel or soul: so he abolished heaven and hell as fictions. Yet even he avoided saying, as Mr. A. points out, There is no God, not out of wisdom, but with that method which often goes with madness. Humanity is all. “Our humble goddess is exempt from the diverse caprices proper to her almighty precursor. Her actions follow appreciable laws.” One may study phenomena: but inquire into causes! never. Else the great First Cause might dawn on the dark mind. This at all costs must not be. Yet what after all is less logical? “It is of necessity that our intelligence should make us conceive of a power without us, so superior to us that to it must be always subordinated our existence” (Phil. Pos. ii. 12). “Our intelligence” not conscience; for this would wake up sense of sin, and so of the God Who judges it. Mind can allow of sin as much as we please, with religions speculation and observances to any extent. Conscience refers sin to God's tribunal.

Mr. A. mentions another of C.'s postulates: “In order to regulate us and combine us, religion must first of all subordinate us to an external power of which the irresistible supremacy does not leave us in any incertitude.” Comte had evidently adopted Popish principles, patting humanity in place of the church, and the religions direction in the hands of his infidel school pupils as its priests. “Comte held that his [the Pope's] day was past, his creed exhaled away from human souls, his moral ascendency forever lost. Therefore must there be another head, the High Priest of Humanity; who, and not the Bishop of Rome, should guide the whole of the reconstituted world. While at Rome they aimed at the perfecting of the machinery of reconstruction, in first passing a dogma without a

General Council—thus setting up empirical autocracy—and next by getting a General Council to make a dogma of the pope's infallibility, thus establishing legal autocracy, Comte aimed at it by the monopoly of education: thus accepting from Rome her exterior circle of means, while, for her inner circle of dogma, substituting dogma of his own" (Arthur, p. 24).

But the dominant fact of the new High Priesthood is a centralization in the head of Humanity far more complete than in the papacy. The succession to all clerical offices is to be in his hands alone, after carefully effacing all means of living from every other source! Never was tyranny so accentuated as in this wild and wicked dream.

If such be the polity, what are the principles? Mr. A. answers: "An apparatus of expedients for forestalling deep thinking by providing men with makeshift explanations, and even by preventing them from seeking any explanation" (p. 39); "a system of universal science, professing to educe a philosophy from observed phenomena, but in reality preceding science by an a priori dogmatic philosophy, and limiting research in science to such points as could be made to illustrate that philosophy" (p. 41). "Law" is assumed to mean the same thing in morals, as in matter, so that men are no more responsible agents than the planets: a conclusion which is justly said to be facilitated by the assumption of certain principles, the most extraordinary ever passed by sane men as enunciated by a sane man. First: in the positive state of mind, man properly speaking, that is, the individual, does not exist, or is only a pure abstraction; what is real is humanity. Secondly: society is an organism; not an organization merely, but an organism. Thirdly: in society no such thing as rights exist, only duties. The word [or notion,] 'rights' must be banished from morals, just like the word 'causes' from philosophy" (p. 42).

Mr. A. thus illustrates the superficial absurdity of Comtism, which allows only phenomena and laws to be studied. "You see a mail coach, you are to note its appearance, length, breadth, height, color, and so forth. Farther, you are to search for its law—eight miles an hour, or nine, or ten. Having learned these, you have learned all that a thing like you was made to learn. Dare not to assume that the appearance, though a perfectly trustworthy index of a coach, is not the coach, and never professed to be. The coach itself, remember, is a phenomenon, an appearance. Dare not to say that the very use of the appearance is to make you aware of the presence of much that does not appear, and to remind you of the existence of many things not here present. Dare not to say that the phenomenon tells you of a post-office, a correspondence, a commerce, a community, a legislation, and an Executive Head. Perhaps you may reply: Not to tell me of anything but its shapes, colors, sections, and the law of velocity, would be to put myself in the place of the dog who stares at the show. Even he, after he has heard it several times, knows more, knows better, than that the law of the coach lies in any rule of proportion between the rate of velocity and the horse-power. Of such rule he may know nothing; but he does know that the law of the coach is in the coachman, who no sooner sets foot on the step than off bounds the dog, anticipating velocity as the result of command. The village boy knows that if the law of the coach lies in the coachman, the law of the coachman lies in the Postmaster-General, and the law of the Postmaster-General in the Sovereign. But neither dog nor boy could know what they do know, were the rules of Comtism the law of even animal mind. It is perfectly true that in practice the rule laid down is not observed by Comte or anyone else; but that does not recall the laying of it down, nor prevent the attempt to work according to it from bridling the movement of mind and warping its direction" (pp. 43, 44).

The truth is that Positivism, far from real progress, is a retrograded movement, so extreme in principle that the human mind can be made to sink no lower, with a bombastic veil of words to hide its sores and rags. What is Comte's “Law of the Three States"? That by invariable necessity the human mind in every one of our principal conceptions, in every branch of our knowledge, passes successively through three different theoretic states: first, the theological or fictitious state; secondly, the metaphysical or abstract state; thirdly, the scientific or positive state. In the first stage the mind studies the nature of things with their causes, originating or final; in the second, or transition stage, the mind replaces supernatural agents by abstract forces, real entities inherent in different things; in the positive stage, all is renounced save the pursuit of their invariable relations of succession and similitude, i.e., phenomena and laws. Comtism will have you to ask, not Why, but How only. You are simply to rank each particular under its class, the height of knowledge! and alone true! Classing a thing is all you are to know or seek; though it really supposes knowledge of the thing and of classification before you can class it with certainty. It is a mere cheat of infidelity, child of the revolution which was the monstrous reaction from popery.

Mr. A. shows clearly that the assumption of the three is folly. For, first, it is untrue that the Three States are universal, many branches of knowledge not passing successively through these stages. Next, they are not necessary, being not universal. Thirdly, they are therefore not necessarily successive. All, as far as true, may concur simultaneously, or they may never all three succeed or coexist. They are not axioms, but unfounded. And Positivism, the desired result, is just limitation to the lowest degree of knowledge, an absolute interdict on all below the surface or above us in time or for eternity, the exclusion of all truth beyond the senses or the mind's inferences, save on the laws of phenomena. It supposes a race without a Why, without a responsible soul yet more, and most of all without God. It is the materialism of Lucretius, of Epicurus, of the most audacious evil-workers among men. The sophistry of its living English representative, Mr. Harrison, is well laid bare in this book. He, too, is not open, replying to Sir Fitzjames Stephen that “There is no godhead now in humanity.” Did he not know that his master laid down (and no Pope ever had or claimed such infallibility) that humanity is a goddess to be worshipped only through her best organs, which to a man are mother, wife, and daughter, to a woman father, husband, and son? No doubt it is the language of Bedlam; but Mr. H. as a Comtist is not free to repudiate it.

Thus Paris is “the metropolis of the regenerated Occident"; and “the august functionary who presides over that everlasting see, governing his clergy everywhere, and directing all nations,” is to receive £2,400, besides allowances for his ecumenical administration, with four national Superiors, presiding over the Italian, Spanish, German, and British “churches.” The French have the High Priest himself (the highest elsewhere being those four Provincials), who more autocratic than the Pope nominates his own successor, now a M. Pierre Lafitte. if the four are not unanimous, the opinion is to be taken of the 2,000 “deans,” or heads of as many “Sacred Colleges.” Each college consists of seven priests and three vicars, and stands besides a temple of humanity, surrounded by a “sacred grove,” where, selected by a judgment conducted seven years after death by the priests, lie the dead canonized, i.e., counted worthy of incorporation with the Goddess of Humanity. The priest ordainable at 42 is entitled to £480, besides traveling expenses, but must renounce private property and earn nothing else; also must be married, but, if widowed, abides so for life. The Vicars receive £240 a year, only preach or teach by dispensation, enter at 35, and fall under the same laws of property and marriage as the priests. The Aspirants are

unlimited in number, not younger than 28, and receive £120 a year; but their giving up property is provisional, and they exercise no spiritual functions. The clergy include medical work, and all the social organs of intellectual life, even coinage, regulation of measures, &c. This hierarchy is to be shortly. Before the end of the nineteenth century France is to be divided into 17 small republics; Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are to be separated from England; and the like everywhere.

The Patriciat and the Proletaires compose the new temporal power, for which words of Comte Mr. A. substitutes capitalists and working men. But our readers may well be spared more of this sort of trash.

Chapter 138

Prayer, Worship, and the Lord's Supper

“The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). Is that great system, which in this day meets our eye and calls itself “The church,” loyally the pillar and ground (or support) of the truth? In appearance there are many systems, but all are one in departure from the truth. The opinions of men have displaced the teachings of God, and in nothing more manifestly than in their ideas of what the church itself is. Men's opinions are influenced by circumstances; but men and circumstances vary in every place and time. Hence the contrariety of opinion which ever diverges from the truth, even to denying it. Opinion, creed, or form, is their badge, not the gathering power in the name of Christ. Hence, He being dishonored, visible unity is lost. Separation from the world has ceased to be a mark of that which claims to be the house of God. The professing church is no longer, save for judgment the pillar and ground of the truth. The candlestick has long been removed.

But the responsibility remains with the relationship; God's word and Spirit abide, and the authority is of the Lord as binding now as in the apostles' day. And though the first beauty of the church is gone, stripped of the jewels, the gifts which adorned her at the beginning, yet there remain spiritual privileges through grace, which are of yet higher moment than any outward ornament, viz: the Lord's Supper, worship, and prayer. Without these the assembly could not be called the assembly of God. These will ever remain, so long as two or three are gathered to the name of Christ. Although mingled with human failure, the presence of the Holy Spirit abides forever; and His grace will be where there is humility and faithfulness to the word of the Lord.

Prayer is the atmosphere of the believer, and is as necessary for the new life as common air is for the natural life. And, first, private prayer which the Lord speaks of in Matt. 6:6. This is the practical starting-point for holiness of life (Acts 9:11). Can there be any living to God at all without it? In the closet we realize our nearness to the Father; there we hear the word intended for our own souls alone. May we not say there in anticipation the white stone is given with the new name written thereon, which no one knows but he that receives it? With what strength we go forth to meet the conflicts of each day when we have received the foretaste of the hidden manna! This is truly for the soul the needed sufficient bread day by day.

The histories of most failures may be traced back to the germ of neglect in secret prayer to God. It leaves the door of the heart open—so to speak—for the entrance of every conceivable evil from without, which mingles with the unjudged nature within. The result, save for sovereign grace, would be fatal. No amount of zeal, no energy in service, can supply the loss which ever follows the neglect of secret prayer; for without it zeal is offensive as being severed from grace, and activity in outward service is so much energy of the flesh. In such cases the salt is threatened with loss of its savor.

But the point now before us is not secret prayer—though nothing more essential for a holy life—but united prayer, the petitions of saints met together for that purpose; in a word, the prayer-meeting, which we may well call a function of the assembly of God. It does not seem too

much to say that there is no better evidence of the healthy condition of an assembly than the habitual attendance and the free supplication of the saints at the prayer-meeting. The lecture and the sermon may attract, and much interest may be taken in meetings for reading the word, where we may recognize not only gift where it is, but the teaching of the Lord in many souls; but these meetings are not so sure a test of spirituality, nor are they assembly-meetings, though every member of the assembly be present. Gifts were prominent at Corinth, but the moral tone and the spiritual intelligence were low. With all their gifts the apostle said, “Ye are yet carnal.”

What more necessary, then, to maintain the high position of being the pillar and ground of the truth than prayer? And when declension set in, and the few faithful began to be marked out from the mass, and distinguished as much for their weakness as for their faith, when the Lord Himself forbids all hope of restoration to the church's pristine position, and says, “I will put upon you none other burden; but that which ye have hold fast till I come” (Rev. 2:24), what more necessary to enable us to hold fast than the prayer-meeting? For it is the barrier against the inroads of the world, shuts the door against the wolf that seeks to enter and scatter the flock, keeps out heterodoxy and divisions, maintains the power of united testimony to the grace of Christ, is the expression of our dependence upon God, and opens the windows of heaven whence comes all we need. Had gathered saints been more mindful of the prayer-meeting, should we now behold the sad spectacle of saints once gathered to His name in present reckless scattering? But so much the more should there be confession, united confession, from the assembly. For if the scattering may not be wholly or at all healed, God will surely meet those who humble themselves on account of the common failure. There will be richer blessing, though not unaccompanied with shame for past unfaithfulness.

To neglect the prayer-meeting is practically to ignore the need of the church. Nothing is more precious than individual communion with God; church blessing is vainly expected without it. If soul-salvation was the only thing God is now doing, there would not be such a thing as the church of God. But He is building the church, and we the living stones are all one in Christ. Nor is the oneness outward only; it is the unity of the Spirit. Are those who habitually neglect the prayer-meeting, without necessary reason, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? The church is surely responsible to keep it; but in the corporate responsibility each member has his share.

Prayer however is not the only function of the assembly. By “function” is meant other than privilege, which may be conferred apart from function. There are functions of the body essential to life; and if one become inactive, a source of weakness ensues to the whole body. Is it not the same with the assembly? The spirituality of the assembly is in proportion to what we may call the healthy vigor of its functions. The worship-meeting, as distinct from prayer-meetings, is equally a function as well as an immense privilege. If not so necessary, it is of a higher character, not perhaps expressive of greater nearness, but rising above our present need to bless God as the source and giver of all good (Psa. 103), to adore Him for what He has revealed to us of Himself. In prayer we come as suppliants to receive; as worshippers we meet together to give to Him. “By Him [Jesus], therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15).

No doubt in a prayer-meeting we give thanks, or confess to His name (Phil. 4:6), even as in worship we are conscious of our need (but we speak of the character of the meeting); and if saints have a special hour during the week for confession, prayer for the assembly, for the gospel, for ourselves and for others, is it not due to God and to Christ that there should also be a special time for worship? When the Lord said, The Father was seeking worshippers, He meant not merely making our requests known to God with supplication and thanksgiving. Surely saints did so, both before and during the time of law. But the Father was about to create a new thing on the earth, even worshippers, such as they were, never seen before—children worshipping the Father. Even heaven never saw it before. And, still more wonderful, the Father seeks the worshippers; it is not men seeking Him. Creature worship, like Cain's, was evil; Samaria, yea, and Israel, are rejected. No need to seek for that; grace seeks, and the worship of God's children is in spirit and in truth. Creation praises God but not intelligently. There was outward worship in Israel with more or less intelligence, but not characterized as in spirit and truth. The believer now does so worship, but, even so, individual homage is far from being all that the Father is seeking, which is found only in His family together. By the one Spirit of God each member must have the spirit of worship, or there will be a jar in the meeting; but it is in the united praise of the saints (i.e., the local assembly as its representative), where is the worship that the Father seeks. The fullness of blessing is there, for the Lord Himself is there; “In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee” (Psa. 22:22, Heb. 2:12).

Should not every assembly have its hour for worship as well as for prayer? Are we not called, called to a place of praise? But it is outside the camp. Let us go forth to Him; and when we go forth to Him Who suffered without the gate, though it be a place of reproach, how does the Holy Spirit characterize us? As worshippers offering the sacrifice of praise continually, the fruit of our lips. An individual that never mentioned the name of his benefactor who daily fed him, save in a few words of thanks when asking and receiving, would be considered wanting in right feeling? Is not the assembly corporately, which has its meeting for prayer, in the attitude of receiving from God, as the meeting for worship is for offering to God? To undervalue, or willfully do without, the immense privilege of meeting to worship in the week, is to defraud God of His due, and to live below our calling. When there is no such meeting, the assembly loses much corporate blessing, as also saints individually. There is this peculiarity about worship, that it will never cease: there will be no prayer-meeting in heaven as here below, no confession to make, no want to be supplied; but the worship we begin here will be continued forever.

The Lord's Supper is the sign of the only foundation, whereby we can either pray or praise; yet is it somewhat distinct from both the prayer-meeting and the worship-meeting, in that it is a special remembrance of the Lord in His death. The wine separate from the bread is the symbol of death, “the Lord's death.” He now lives for evermore, but He was dead, and we should never forget it. The Lord, too, calls on us specifically to remember Him thus when dead; not merely the fact of His death, but that it was He Who died. We look up to Him with joy, for we know Him now on the throne. We do not eat the Lord's Supper with bitter herbs, as Israel did the passover; for we show forth His death on the resurrection day. Have you heard saints at the Lord's Table, say “we remember Him now on the throne"? Thank God! He looks at the heart and accepts the intent; but such words are most inaccurate. If there be will against the eloquent fact of the broken bread and the cup, it becomes irreverent unbelief. We remember that He died, but we know as a present fact

He is risen and glorified. Above all facts His death speaks to the heart, as it cleared the conscience and even humbled us to the dust.

The Lord's Supper is not an individual thing, as prayer and thanksgiving may be. It needs two to celebrate it, or rather to remember the Lord in His appointed way; one cannot. Therefore it is the token of fellowship; and as it sets forth the foundation truth of Christianity, all who ought to partake are accepted as real believers. The will to not partake is in effect to be out of fellowship. This is so well understood that saints who are too negligent as to the prayer-meeting and the worship-meeting are as a rule careful to be present at the breaking of bread. Nevertheless negligence as to the other meetings is a source of weakness when all do break bread, and is a great loss to those who so fail.

The object of this paper is, not to enter into the nature of worship, which in practice can be taught only by the Holy Spirit, but to recall saints to the inestimable privilege of worship, the worship of God's family as such, and, one may say, to the duty of it, which every loving child of God will surely respond to.

Chapter 139

Present Prospects: Part 1

The knowledge of the mind of God is the Christian's only security both for determining his true position in the world, and his being preserved in it, steadfast and immovable. Where this is not ascertained, all must be doubt and perplexity, and his path must be uncertain, nay, inevitably wrong. Where it is known, he is, in a certain sense, omnipotent. This consideration has an especial application to the present state and prospects of the people of God. Many may say indeed, as to any inquiry beyond present things, What is truth? But the scripture sets before us the clear and definite counsels of Him Who changeth not; marks out the distinct character of every principle, whether good or evil, in His view; traces their respective advances, and exhibits the great general results to which they are severally progressing. And these things the church is directed to observe. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn,” &c. And the same apostle, after portraying the characters of evil in the last days, specifies this as the safeguard of the saints, “That they know these things before” (2 Peter 1:19; 3:17).

All our light then is darkness, unless our apprehension of the circumstances in which we are standing accord with the revealed truth of God concerning them. To take a practical example. One visible anxiety of the believer, I mean of one who is accepted in the Beloved, with regard to himself, is that his service be given wisely to the Lord. But it seems evident that, unless the purposes of God for this dispensation be gathered by him from the written word, his labors must often be misdirected, and possibly, as to their results, given more to the house of the stranger (Prov. 5:10) than to God's. For instead of ministering according to his ability in God's husbandry, his powers may be diverted into channels, whence no enduring fruit is returned to the Lord's glory, and where His Spirit would never have led him; and to all that is not done in the Spirit the word of Jesus applies, “He that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.” Unless the unchanging distinction between the church and the world up to the “time of the end” be seen, the expectation of a gradual diffusion of Christianity must constantly operate to the consuming of our services upon that which will absorb into itself all the energy and power of the laborer, and still remain the world.

The subject assumes an import even still more weighty when considered with regard to the consummation declared in that portion of the revelation of God's will which embraces the present age. For it must inevitably make a wide practical difference in the Christian's position in the world, whether he considers it as going on to blessedness, or, on the contrary, to judgment. For on this must, to a great extent, depend the actual character in which it appears to his eyes, and consequently his own conduct and views with regard to it. The views of surrounding things, taken by two believers, one of whom considers them to be thus far in their progress to perfection, while the other sees that sentence upon them is delayed, only because “the long suffering of the Lord is salvation” (2 Peter 3), must be as different as light from darkness. Nor is it too much to say that the character of their testimony will equally vary. For testimony is given in power, only in proportion as the truth of the circumstances in which he stands is recognized by him who has to give it; and if his

mind is resting upon the hope of a progressive enlightening of the world, while it may be that fearful darkness is fast closing in, all his wisdom will be folly. Most of the Lord's people indeed, in common with others, feel that the aspect of the times is sufficiently awful; yet perhaps the greater number are inclined to consider it as temporary, with the hope that it will subside.

Let us briefly try present things by the test of scripture, for to this will be our safest appeal. If we judge by sight in anything, we shall assuredly err. And therefore it is only by taking the word as our criterion, though appearances may seem ever so contradictory, that our judgment can be true.

First, then, how does scripture uniformly describe the character of the church throughout the dispensation? And here we at once meet with the incontrovertible fact that the whole tenor of the commands and exhortations throughout the Gospels and Epistles to the people of God are, from their very nature, applicable only to a comparatively small number, in the midst of a world lying in wickedness. The irreversible principle of the dispensation is that “many are called but few chosen;” and with this correspond all the practical addresses of our Lord and His apostles. It is therefore in absolute contrast to a dispensation, in which it is said, “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.”

The two can never become identical; for, on the supposition that this dispensation should grow into one of universal truth, the whole character of the apostolic Epistles would gradually become inappropriate to the circumstances of the church. The characters to whom they are addressed are thus described, “The sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:15). “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not” (1 John 3). “We know that we are of. God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one, ■ν τ■ πονηρ■” (1 John 5:19). “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9).

More especially is the nature of the dispensation, as regards His followers, described by the Lord: they are said to be “the poor in spirit,” “the mourners,” “the meek,” “the persecuted for righteousness' sake “; they are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, as sheep among wolves, as the wheat among tares, which, grow, increase, and ripen together, until, in the end of this age, το■ α■■νος το■του, the Son of man shall send to gather out of His kingdom all things that offend. The present is a dispensation of witness, and of witness only (Matt. 24:14); and as such essentially incongruous with one of universality: the insignia of God's people throughout are the cross and the reproach of Christ. In truth, the position of the church in the world, if it were faithful, never could be any other, and, in the present earthly glory of the professing church, the light of scripture exhibits only the deceit of Satan and apostasy.

Chapter 140

Present Prospects: Part 2

The character of the world also is no less clearly and decisively given as being ever in invariable opposition and enmity to God and to His Christ; and so characterized, not in a vague and generalizing way, but as a definite mass, in which the “prince of the power of the air” rules, even the god of this world, “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Any supposed amelioration of the world as such, is only Satan's lie to bring the children of God into contact with it in some way or other, by inducing the supposition that the principles of God are working in it, to unite by degrees all in the Truth. Yet is the church's state spoken of as being ever a, suffering one till her Lord returns, and He has spoken of no time of blessedness to her, or to the groaning creation, until then. “She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.”

But the sure word of prophecy does not fail us here. The last days are shown to terminate in the deepest shades of moral evil; and they have been written for the church's warning, if her eyes were but open to read them. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Tim. 3). “There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?” (2 Peter 3) “Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists” (1 John 2:18). The whole of Jude is also an awakening testimony to the same effect.

But above all, in the last book of prophecy, is the dispensation presented in its true aspect, both in progress and consummation. And here, whatever difference there may be as to details of interpretation, the principles exhibited in it are at least distinctly stated. Not a word is contained in it of progressive advance in the world, not one of the gradual spread of Christianity; but darkness, fearful darkness, is brought out in unvarying direct opposition to the light of life; for the conclusion is that the earth and the whole world are gathered together in collective array against the Lamb (Rev. 19). We see presented in it (and this, excluding all theories of interpretation) the principles upon which the world is acting, and how they end; and God's principles, their full and marked separation from the world, and their result; the progress and final development of the mysteries of godliness and iniquity; the separation of the powers of holiness and sin. The obvious practical application to all, even to the poor and unlearned (for “blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein"), is in the observing the characters of evil which are described in this book, in order to avoid being in any way mingled with them, and with the final judgment in which they are indiscriminately involved. The principles on which the world proceeds must clearly end, not in peace, but in judgment. And whatever may be predicted from present appearances of the moral elevation of the world, all things that the children of this generation esteem, the riches, the luxury, the magnificence, the

pride of man, come only to this, “Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.” Let our hearts weigh this well, if we are looking for anything better from the strength and power of man, or are connected with what gives place and distinction in the world. “The Lord alone will be exalted in that day.”

But is there nothing now corresponding to these dark features? I say nothing as to the time when the full consummation of these things shall take place, though we may believe them not to be far off: but is not the mystery of iniquity now working, and are not all the principles already in operation, which as soon as the restraining hand of God upon evil is removed, will burst forth unto the fall manifestation of the power of darkness? Let us watch the present movement in this country, in Ireland, nay, over the whole of Europe; and we shall see that it is not a superficial modification of things which is now in progress, but an impulse arising from the very central springs of this world's action. The mind of the age is working definitely and steadily to one object, which to the infidel and the philosophizing Christian may seem the commencement of the renovation of society.

Yet it cannot but be seen, by one who looks below the surface, that the very foundations of the established constitution of things are breaking up under an irresistible influence, which may produce the explosion at any hoar. Even the apparent approximation to unity is but the selfish principle of man's nature, gathering together all which ministers to his senses or his intellect, for himself and against God, in a word, the unity of an antichrist. For a season indeed there may be an appearance of calmness on the face of things. But this we are prepared to expect, for deceivableness is the special character of the last days; and therefore the Spirit of God is more than ever needed to detect the falsehood which surrounding circumstances ever convey to the eye of sense, and to enable the Christian to judge of them as they are in the estimate of God. The natural man judging according to sense must necessarily err in all his conclusions, for they are drawn from external appearances.

Reason may be correct enough in its deductions from natural facts, but reason does not recognize the one great fact that sin is in the world; and therefore all its conclusions are astray, because they are not based upon that which alone enables the spiritual man to account for all the apparent strangeness and contrariety of existing things Man has not a thought in communion with God, except through His Spirit, Who dwells in those that believe and know the truth; and it is marvelous (seeing that the fall brought utter disunion from God, and that fallen nature, under every coloring that may be super induced by the pride of civilized man, is still nature separated from God, and acting for itself), that the supposition should be entertained by any of our Christian brethren of a state of universal peace and righteousness being established through the causes which are at present in operation. There is and can be no foundation for the reign of holiness (setting aside all that prophecy teaches as to the introduction of this period) in a state of things built up by man, arising out of the necessity of his case; for the whole result of the energy and power of the world is based upon a system of necessity, and that necessity springs from its alienation from God. Nay, such a reign as is looked for would be nothing but the dominion of Satan, using for his own purposes the folly and self-will of men, and bringing them into confederated union with every outward display of human glory against the glory of the King of kings and Lord of lords. And if this day be expected, are we to think it far distant?

The evident tendency of all the principles now at work in the world is to bring men into organized association, upon the ground of their common wants and pleasures. And the result, hastened as it will be by the resources afforded by modern inventions and facility of intercommunication, will be the acting, upon a grander and more daring scale, of the scene of gathering together against God, which was prefigured at Babel. For “now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do,” to be succeeded, indeed, by an outpouring of judgment, of which the scattering of the nations, the destruction of the old world, and the fires of Sodom, have been merely foreshadowings. “As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded: but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed” (Luke 17:26-30).

It may be well imagined, if these things are so, and if the present dispensation ends in apostasy and consequent excision, that the whole policy of Satan will be used to divert the minds of believers from the consideration of them. And thus in truth it is; and we may observe his power exercised, both in leading some into unholy and unscriptural speculations, and also in using these as instruments for bringing the study of the simple truth itself into discredit in the estimation of others. Either way his end is gained; for “if we know not these things before,” there is no security against “being led away by the error of the wicked” (2 Peter 3).

In the meantime what is the church doing—that which should be a light in the world, bearing a clear-shining testimony for God, and against all the deceivableness of unrighteousness, in separation from all evil? Even as it has ever done, seeking its own and not the things of Jesus Christ. We have one portion of so-called churchmen (in Ireland) defending their present position, on the lately discovered plea, that “The body that professes to be guided solely by the written word is certain to be wrong in principle, and defective in practice;” and proposing tradition to be taken as the supplement of this deficiency in the means provided for the guidance and instruction of the church of Christ. Another division (at Oxford), having discovered the insufficiency of former vindications, have so far progressed toward Romanism, as to rest their claims upon apostolic succession alone, and already speak of dispensing the sacrifice.

In another quarter the Dissenters are marshalling themselves in the ranks of the infidel and the Socinian, and grasping at all the power and privilege that the world can give them And the evangelical body alas! are more guilty and inconsistent than all, inasmuch as they profess a form of sound doctrine, seeking to unite the confession of Jesus with the possession of credit and influence in the world, instead of being content to take the only portion of His followers here, even suffering for His name's sake. Each party is contending for its own in present things; but in one thing they are all united—in closing their ears to the whole succession of fearful warnings which are pealing around them, and in soothing into slumber themselves, and those to whom they should be as watchmen, in utter disregard of the clear and distinct announcements, which—line upon line—are given in scripture, of the manner in which this dispensation arrives at its close. “The vision of all is become as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned”

(Isa. 29:11).

All these are indications of the latter days, which the scripture leads us to expect; but there is nothing in them which need for a moment move or perplex the mind that looks at them in the light of God's word. Nay, the rushing in of evil on all sides even becomes in mercy the means of establishing the Christian more firmly, because it has been spoken of before; and that which in itself might disturb, does in reality only add to his confidence in the sure word of Him Who has written it for his warning, and Who will deliver those who have kept “the word of His patience” “from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them which dwell upon the earth.” Yea, there is yet more, far more, of comfort to be drawn from the evil day; one thought in which the believer may find rest, even in the hope of the coming and kingdom of Jesus, the period of resurrection-glory to His saints, and of righteousness and peace to the earth; when the world-kingdom that is now shall change its present rulers, even Satan and wicked spirits in heavenly places (Eph. 6:12), and become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. “Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice,” was the special character of the period of His absence; but He has fixed no interval to faith; and the point on which the eye of His disciples rests is His coming, when the word of promise shall be fulfilled. “I will see you again; and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”

In the present crisis, as ever, there is but one position for the church to occupy, and this is separation from “all that is in the world,” whilst keeping the “testimony of Jesus;” a position of which the strength is in knowing that there God is on our side, and against all sin. It is a day in which it well behooves believers to look to themselves, that on the one hand they may be found walking in the Spirit, and on the other that they may not be connected with any form of evil, however accredited. “Judgment must begin at the house of God;” and since nothing of human might or device will stand in that day, it is of the deepest importance, if we look for it, to stand clear of all that will be swept away at His appearing. May the Lord enable us to abide in Him, and to walk in that simplicity which alone is wisdom, and which will remove every difficulty from our path. H. B.

Chapter 141

The Priesthood of the Laity

Such is the title of an essay, written in a good and temperate spirit, now lying before me. The argument is based on the analogy of Israel, who all had the promise of priesthood (Ex. 19:5), and yet none but the family of Aaron could minister in the sanctuary. So in the church is the plea.

The truth is that N.T. Scripture here proves not a resemblance but a contrast; and this is not a merely apparent circumstantial difference, but radical and essential, from the nature of Christianity and the church, as compared with Judaism.

If the writer of the paper had looked more closely into Scripture with a spiritual eye, he would have observed that the promise to the people was conditional. “If ye will obey My voice and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me from among all peoples; for all the earth is Mine, and ye shall be onto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (R. V.). The people in fact disobeyed and did not inherit any such blessing. The law was broken in its foundation by the worship of a false god before the tables of stone were conveyed by Moses, as they were indeed shattered in holy indignation, the sign of Israel's total failure in responsibility. If they were given afterward, it was to shut them up in the ark, the type of Christ Who alone made the law honorable.

To the Christian all is in contrast. He stands on and in Christ alone. In Him he has eternal life, in Him redemption; his characteristic blessings flow from unconditional grace. By grace he has been and is saved through faith; and that not of himself: it is the gift of God. It is not of works, that no man should glory. For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.

Hence the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is full of typical allusion to the O.T., always speaks of the cleristiam, as such enjoying priestly access to God, drawing near not only to a throne of grace, but into the holies at all times through the rent veil; and this as a present privilege, not as a promise for the future. It is in marked superiority for every believer over not the priests only but the very high priest of Israel. (See Heb. 4; 10; 13)

Not otherwise speak Peter and John. Cf. 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6. It is a privilege conferred unconditionally, and actually enjoyed by the entire body of Christians.

And as this is proved positively, so the notion that Christian ministers draw nearer, and thus are priests for the alleged Christian laity, is unknown to the N. T. Even the inspired apostle puts himself, along with those he is instructing by the Holy Ghost, in one common nearness of approach to God. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He dedicated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and [having] a Great Priest over the house of God; 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” (Heb. 10:19-22).

Nor could any one wonder at this ground of nearness, which is laid down in Rom. 5, in 1 Cor. 1, in 2 Cor. 1, in Galatians above all in Eph. 1; 2, in a word almost everywhere supposed; for it is the fruit of that infinite work of Christ which has already brought the believer to God (though not yet to heaven). It has made us “heavenly,” even before we put on the image of the Heavenly, as we shall at His coming. This is far more than blotting out sins, though, if they were not remitted, all else would be vain.

The assertion of a human priesthood on earth for the Christian is therefore a virtual denial of the gospel, as it is without a shred of support from the N. T., which excludes all ground for such an order.

That Israel by-and-by will have an earthly priesthood, besides being a priestly nation as compared. with the nations then to be blessed, is clear from Ezek. 44, &c. But our position is heavenly, even while we are on earth: for we are Christ's body, which will not be their relationship in that day.

Finally, there is as usually confusion of priesthood with ministry; which last is as characteristic of Christianity as earthly priesthood is of Israel. Ministry is the exercise of a spiritual gift from the Lord, each in the place assigned sovereignly and for the purposes of His love. Priesthood was an order of men to draw near to God for others who had no. such access. But every Christian has this access to God, not as a shadow like the sons of Aaron, but in the fullest and abiding reality. Ministry is the divinely given service of some for the good of all. As priests we all draw near to God, ministry by chosen vessels proclaims the truth from God.

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Chapter 143

Proposed Reunion of Anglicanism and Congregationalism

On April 10th, 1889, a letter at the request of the bishops was addressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to Dr. Falding, the chairman of the Congregational Union, with a copy of an Encyclical Letter issued by the Conference at Lambeth. The Resolution referred to is an expression of their readiness to enter into brotherly conference with the representatives of other Christian communions in the English-speaking races, in order to consider what steps can be taken toward corporate reunion, or toward preparing the way for it. The basis suggested consists of the Scriptures, the two shorter Creeds, the two Sacraments, and the “Historic Episcopate.”

The reply of the English and Welsh Congregational Union, adopted at Hull on October 1st, reciprocates the goodwill of the Anglican Conference, and thanks the Archbishop for his official communication. There as the usual hailing of an increased spirit of catholicity, the usual deprecation of ecclesiastical divisions. An arrangement for meetings for worship and service from both sides is suggested as a seemly preparation for the larger question raised. The limitation of the proposed conference to questions', of ecclesiastical incorporation, they feel, presents difficulty to them as believing that unity in diversity is nearer the Lord's mind than any incorporation now practicable: The Historic Episcopate they declare to be an insuperable obstacle, though maintaining that in a sense it is fully realized in their midst and by their churches. “Our pastors are bishops, and we strenuously affirm and teach that their Episcopate is at once primitive and historical.” “This office our pastors hold by divine authority, and through divine appointment, their institution being of Christ, Who acts through the voice and election of the churches, whose one and common Head He is.” Viewing the last point proposed by the bishops to be a surrender of their settled conviction as to what to them is of the essence of the church, they are compelled to decline a conference on that basis. Yet they cherish the hope that the Letter may be the beginning of happier relations. But with singular ignorance of the truth they “pray that the spirit of power and love and a sound mind may be so bestowed on the members of the several Christian churches of our land, that by one Spirit we may all be baptized into one body,” &c. Now if not baptized already by one Spirit, there is no such thing as the church, the one body of Christ. It is a relationship already formed.

Thus the correspondence clearly enough shows where our brethren are. On neither side is there real intelligence of the church; still less is there any right estimate of our deplorable departure from that truth in practice. It is beyond measure sanguine to hope that Episcopalians and Congregationalists can join in an organic body. Even Presbyterians would find it all but impossible conscientiously to allow diocesan superiority over presbyters. Nor could there be honest union between those who believe authority comes from the Lord through apostles, and those who accept it through “the voice and election of the churches” —a principle wholly unknown to Scripture, save for those charged with the administration of temporal means. Not that the Anglicans have solid ground in fact, though their theory is nearer Scripture. For, as the church outwardly was falling to ruin, God took care not to perpetuate His sanction. His grace continued all that was vital and edifying; but He made no provision for the future maintenance of authority to ordain Titus or others

might ordain by the apostle's direction in a given sphere and at a given time; but there was no hint of an abiding successional authority. As the Episcopalians therefore have nothing but an unscriptural assumption in their “orders,” the dissenters are still farther off; for they set up an anti-scriptural source in popular election., which never applies to ministry in the word.

The truth is that we are in a fallen and low condition; which only few see, and still fewer feel aright. This is the first want to-day, to search God's word and learn from Him how far we are in every way from the mind and heart of Christ. Dr. Conder referred to such men as Bishop Lightfoot and Vice-Principal Hatch, to whom he might have added Dr. Jacob, &c., conceding the whole contention as to the primitive churches and ministry. But the dissenters vainly seek to escape by refusing to own that the apostolic constitution of the church is the only legitimate model.

Nor is it in detail only that the discord is complete. Neither the established party nor the non-conformists seem to see that what Christ set up by the Holy Spirit was one body everywhere; meeting perhaps in a hundred localities throughout even a city no larger than Jerusalem, but all designated as the church there; meeting in hundreds or thousands of places in other lands and in other tongues, but all alike members of one and the same body. Churches there were in different towns and of different districts; yet not so as in our day, and for many sad years, where a member of one is for this reason not of another; but a member of God's church where he lived, and therefore a member of His church where-ever he moved. The saints in Rome, in Jerusalem, in Corinth, in Antioch, and everywhere else, composed the church of God on earth.

It is well that some of the best-informed men in the Anglican body own frankly how sad and deep is the change from apostolic order, the only one contemplated, as it was formed, by the Holy Spirit. Alas! the non-conformists cannot more distinctly condemn themselves than by denying the obligation of all to judge themselves by that only divine standard ecclesiastically as well as dogmatically. To depart from it is what the apostle in Titus 3 denounces as (not heterodoxy, but) heresy, which in the Epistles is always treated as sin. If some get rid of the sense of failure by the unbelieving denial of the standard God has given us, what can one think of others who own the wrong and yet go on with it as if right? The fact is that the glory of Christ is concerned in the highest degree; and is nothing due to the Spirit He has sent from heaven to guide the church across the desert to her heavenly Bridegroom and home? Further, a vast deal of N. T. Scripture, which it is our especial responsibility to receive, enjoy, and walk in, becomes misunderstood and unheeded, because a false position renders it practically inapplicable.

And what is the true remedy? To humble ourselves before God in the sense of common ruin, and so much the more, because we know that the coming of the Lord draws nigh; to cease to do evil, as far as we discern it in our conscience by His word; and by the same word to learn to do well, each in the measure of grace given and in the place the Lord deigns to use him, without pretending to more: a lowly position in good sooth, but how graciously provided of God for the present anomalous condition of the saints scattered once more, instead of gathered together in one as the fruit of Christ's death.

Chapter 144

Thoughts on Psalm 1-2: Part 1

It was an important question put by Philip to the eunuch, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” And the eunuch's answer was not less solemn, “How can I except some man should guide me?” It was an acknowledgment of incompetency to understand without a teacher, a quasi-confession of the great fact, whatever may be the vain boasting of human learning, that the unassisted mind of man is totally inadequate to apprehend the truth of God.

The truth is the declaration of God's will and power, first as Creator and Ruler, then of His mind, yea of Himself; the Son being the expression of it when He became flesh. But this makes known the truth about man— “without strength.” God has used human words, and His wisdom has shaped them to convey His meaning. We recognize the vehicle, it is our common speech. The words are of every-day use and employed about earthly things. God has used them for heavenly things, and this use exalts human language to the highest place among earthly gifts. Was not language formed for this purpose specially, that man might know and be a channel for the truth?

But none can understand the divine things spoken of save as guided by the great and only teacher—the Holy Spirit. This was the eunuch's difficulty; Philip was the Spirit's chosen instrument for teaching him.

A great part of the Bible is a record of facts, but not merely a record. And because it is more than a narrative of facts, the history is momentous and all-important. For each event has an import only revealed in the light of Christ. Everything in that book is in connection with Him, “and without Him was not anything made that was made.” By His Spirit He preached to the disobedient in the days of Noah. He is the Anointed King of Israel, and the Head of the church; and these comprise His rejection and exaltation, His sufferings and glory. Spiritual things are contained therein to be discerned only by the spiritual. As mere history, the record is most interesting, and the natural mind can in some degree appreciate it—save where infidelity and the base corruption of the world have vitiated. its perceptive power. A man whose mind has not been thus degraded. will, though unconverted, admit the historical accuracy of the Bible, and in measure may apprehend the righteous government of God in Israel; if educated in the literature of the world, he may speak glowingly of the beauties of Hebrew poetry, of the fervor and sublimity of the prophetic writings; but he has no capacity to go beyond the mere letter. Not even the believer, though the babe has an unction from the holy One to know all things, can reach the hidden but intended meaning and instruction to be conveyed in the least fact or circumstance by his own unaided mind, but only as he is taught of God; and no one is savingly taught of God without being born of God. As born of God he can receive instruction, but there must also be the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Not everywhere does the full meaning of the written word lie wholly on the surface (save the glad tidings to the lost, where he that runs may read). The eye must be opened by grace to see beneath. It may be only a simple relation of an apparently unimportant event; but in every circumstance there is an earthly vessel containing a heavenly truth. Our discernment of it is another matter, but the portraiture of divine truth in human frames is characteristic of God's book,

and is very observable in the Old Testament. Let us never forget that it is God's relation of events on the earth which are overruled by Him, and written not because it was history, but because it is intended to convey to the church the treasures of His wisdom and grace. The whole together is the revelation of God's thoughts about Christ, and we need like the eunuch some one to guide us. In short, to understand the divine word we need a divine Teacher.

This is nowhere felt more than in reading the Psalms. Their great theme is the First-Begotten, the rejected King in conflict with the enemy; first suffering, then conquering; suffering because He would be joined to the godly remnant of Israel, who also are victors at the end because they are joined to Him. We have the psalms of David, of Asaph, and of others, written no doubt at various times, but all arranged in divine order, as well as each one inspired by the Holy Spirit, to set forth the experiences of Him who went through them all as a man here below.

A human application of them has led saints in this period of grace to take the sword and go armed into battle; not seeing the Lord's meaning when He said, if a man had no sword let him sell his garment and buy one. The disciples misunderstood and foolishly boasted of having two swords. Was not the Lord's meaning plain when He said, “It is enough?” If our warfare were with flesh and blood, would two swords be enough? Nay, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. Not the material sword to resist the world, but an intimation that the sword of the world would be unsheathed against them, a warning from the Lord that they would have to meet the world's fiercest enmity. Peter failed to see, and in the garden used the sword of which he boasted against the high priest's servant. The Lord then spoke plainer, “Put up thy sword,” and at once healed the servant's ear. Thus He rebuked by word and deed the fleshly impulse of Peter. Alas! how many saints notwithstanding the teaching of the Lord have followed not His teaching but Peter's example. And we are all exposed to the danger, the folly of going down to Egypt for help, of trusting in an arm of flesh.

Righteous judgment upon the wicked, the enemy, and ultimate deliverance and triumph of the godly, is the burden of the Psalms. The godly, however, pass through great suffering before the day of triumph comes. While they wait for their victory, another and different warfare is now waged, it is carried on with different weapons. In rebuking Peter the Lord was disclosing a new principle, which was henceforward, during the day of grace, to guide the spirit and mark the conduct of those who bear His name. In the Psalms the sword is not “put up"; it is invoked and held over the head of all enemies, and this according to the will and purpose of God. While waiting, the Psalms record the exercises of a godly man suffering from the power of the wicked, and patiently enduring till the day of triumph. To these sufferers it was never said, “that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matt. 5:39). And again, “they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matt. 26:52). Their warfare is with flesh and blood. Mingled with their cries of distress are the words of unwavering faith and confidence in God while calling upon Him to take vengeance upon the oppressor, which is not the Spirit of grace teaching us to love our enemies, save the pious expressions of dependence upon God, and the assurance of His mercy, and of ultimate deliverance, which saints of God can use at all times. We feel that the Psalmist is not on Christian ground. The invocation of judgment is not Christian prayer, and to rejoice in the destruction of human enemies is not Christian feeling. The Psalms contemplate an aspect of God towards the ungodly different from that which is being declared in the gospel, now that He is not judging, but calling sinners to repentance and saving all

who believe. “For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.” Almost the latest words of the Lord upon the cross give the character of this current time, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Stephen, the first martyr, if his be not the first Christian death, echoes with his dying breath the prayer of his Lord and Master, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” Grace and love are the characteristics of saints now, such as we do not find in the Psalms. It is clear then that, while we can legitimately and profitably use largely the words of piety and faith found in them, as a whole the psalms are not expressions of Christian standing or of our proper hope. They are for the special use of another family of God, whose proper experiences will be in harmony with the dealings of God when He is judging the earth, as ours are, or should be now, in this day of sovereign grace, during which He is not judging, but calling out a heavenly people.

“Blessed is the man.” This MAN all through the Psalms is ever foremost in the mind of the Holy Spirit. He, though joined with the godly remnant in all their sorrows and afflictions, Who supplies them with words of true confession and of prayer suited to their circumstances, yet stands apart from them in the purity of His life, in the absolute holiness of His Person. And the wonderful truth seen in the Psalms is the place He took in His perfect integrity in the midst of a remnant, who, though morally separate from the ungodly of the nation, yet in themselves were obnoxious to divine judgments. We may say—Who is He?—not that we are ignorant of Him, but in wonder that this Perfect Man could and would identify Himself with a sinful, though sorrowing and repentant remnant. He is the perfect, but meek and lowly, Man of Nazareth.

When He at His baptism entered publicly into relationship with them, John the Baptist seemed surprised. “Comest Thou to me?” Taught of God the Baptist knew that He was no mere man; but not till He came up out of the water, and the Holy Spirit like a dove was seen descending from heaven and abiding upon Him, did John know that “The same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” Then John owned Him to be the Son of God. By His baptism, He before God, and in the sight of Israel, associated Himself with those who went into the Jordan confessing their sins. No wonder that the Baptist was astonished at His taking such a place and choosing such companions. But He came to take this place. “Suffer it to be so now” —an answer which, while pointing to the righteous necessity of His being there, expresses His grace and His humiliation, but withal the consciousness of His own dignity.

“Now,” it was the hoar when Israel's Messiah appeared among them, the first public step for their re-establishment in the earth according to the counsels of God in righteousness. This their special blessing is now delayed because Israel rejected Him, and a yet greater purpose is being carried out, which being fulfilled, Israel will come again to the front, and Jehovah will make a short work in righteousness.

But there is more than grace in Christ their Messiah thus joining Himself with sinners confessing their sins in the waters of the Jordan. “For thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” Divine justice could not otherwise be vindicated. In grace He had to take their place and to bear their judgment. To be a propitiation for the sin of the world, to meet the case of the outcast Gentile, did not necessitate His association with those who were baptized in the Jordan confessing their sins. To Israel it was necessary, for they had broken the law whose claims could not be set aside; the judgment must take its course. And if judgment upon the guilty had been the only question, there

would have been no need for the advent of Christ. Judgment like the deluge upon the antediluvians would have swept them all away. But there was a prior question; there were promises which were before the law and could be no more set aside than the law. If Israel alone had to pay the penalty of the broken law, who could inherit the promises? On the other hand, if they were put in possession of the promised blessings, ignoring the law, what becomes of the judgments and righteous character of God? God provided a MAN Who could reconcile, and has reconciled the claims of promise and of law; Who even as to His human birth and genealogy was the only One Who could legally and righteously occupy the place of representative. He is the rightful heir of David's throne, and the king was the governmental link between God and Israel. He only could morally and divinely bear the penalty and judgment of God's law, but Who also could win back the forfeited promises, and establish them in a better form and on fuller ground than before appeared, or was possible. To do this was the counsel of mercy and peace; but the way of doing it was in fulfilling all righteousness, not merely submitting to the claims of a broken law, but establishing the truth of God. He who represented Israel (the remnant) went into their position, even into the Jordan, subsequently took their infirmities and bore their diseases (Matt. 8 compared with Isa. 53), and ultimately bore their stripes and their sins in His own body on the tree, that through Him all their promised blessings might be assured, while at the same time God was taking vengeance upon them for their iniquity and rebellion. To cast down after lifting up their king (as it were, God breaking the kingly link between Himself and Israel) was judicial dealing on the nation. He the rightful King was cast down, and cut off from His inheritance as Son of David (for a time); under the righteous government of God He had nothing, though the Heir of all things.

He who suffered all this alone fills up the ideal of the blessed Man of the first Psalm; yet for higher reasons enjoyed none of the promised stability and blessedness—in fact, none in more marked contrast.

Thoughts on Psalm 1-2: Part 2

His was a lonely and a despised path. All through it He was bearing Israel's strokes, not making atonement; that was only on the cross when He made His soul an offering for sin. On the cross were the heaviest strokes surely, but there was atonement also, there was blood-shedding which gives a vicarious, a substitutory value (we may say) to all that He then endured for Israel. The healing power of the stripes is because His blood was shed. He died under the claims of a broken law, and thus, declared the inexorable justice of God; in His death He was fulfilling righteousness and establishing truth. But it is His blood that brings redemption (Eph. 1:7). Christ had died having been made sin, and from a dead Christ the atoning blood flows. The soldiers saw that He was dead, but one of them pierced His side and the precious blood flowed, without which there could be no remission. As on the passover night, not the dead lamb within but the blood without was the salvation of Israel. His blood was shed for the purposes of grace. His death was the completing of that righteousness of which His baptism was the initiation.

Precious blood! What makes His blood so precious to God? Is it because He was that holy thing born of the Virgin? Because He was that perfect blessed Man, who always, day and night, meditated in the law of God? Who always did the things that pleased His Father? Yea, it is precious because He, the spotless One, was made sin, and bore the full weight of God's wrath against sin even to death, He paid the full penalty and glorified God. The offering was accomplished, He had dismissed His soul. The law can demand nothing after death; and the redeeming blood flowed not from a dying Christ, but from a dead Christ. The vindication of righteousness, the honor of God's law, was proclaimed by the cross, and could not be added to when He died. The blood was shed after that. It is the blood of Him who thus glorified God, therefore it is precious to Him. It is precious to God because He can now remit sin and righteously forgive. Christ is the wisdom and the power of God, as well as the infinite expression of His love.

To return to our Psalm; it speaks not of His divine glory as Son of God, nor of His official glory as King of Israel—that is in the second psalm—but His own personal character, of moral glory as the perfect Man. “Blessed is the Man.” Yea, blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; and believers in Christ know that this blessedness is of a higher character than what we could have had in creation purity as Adam before he sinned. It is more blessed to be joined by the Spirit to Christ, than to have been maintained in Adamic innocence and goodness. It is this superior blessedness that led Paul, with his eye fixed upon the immense fact, that believers had died with Christ and were risen with Him, so that in the power of resurrection life we might live to God after a holier sort than an innocent but unredeemed man could know—that led him to thank God that we, having been the slaves of sin, had now obeyed from the heart the form of teaching into which we were instructed (Rom. 6).

But this Man of the first Psalm is perfection and needed no forgiveness. His blessedness is peculiar to Himself. His is not the innocence of the first Adam, who (as created) knew no evil, but the perfection of the last Adam, Who in divine purity lived in the midst of sinners, and delighted in

the law with cognizance of all and condemned sin. He meditates in the law day and night, no intermission, uninterrupted communion with God in His law. The law implies the presence of sinners; the law is not made for the righteous. This perfect Man is in the midst of sinners, and alone among them. When the Lord was here, there were a very few who slave to Him. In our Psalm He alone is looked at till we come to the last verse. All others were walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, sitting in the seat of the scornful. It was on their account that law was there. He does not ignore the law because it could not touch Him—had nothing to say to Him as it had to all others; He delights in it. To other men it imposed a check, placing a barrier against their wills. To Him it is the expression of God's will as to what a man should be, and He, both in nature and in life, fully answers to it, and finds joy in it. Yea, it is the expression of His own will, in perfect accord with the will, of God.

This perfect Man is not in heaven contemplating the divine attributes, nor is it the enjoyment of the works of God in the peaceful garden of Eden, but He is in the midst of sinners, surrounded with evil, yet delighting in the law which pronounces the judgment of God upon sinful men. These are the circumstances in which the perfect Man is found. All outside Himself is imperfect and evil, He alone walking in perfect obedience. We hear the same perfect wondrous Man in the Gospel, “I do always the things that are pleasing to Him” (John 8:29). Consider Him in the midst of evil: how unlike the first man, who with everything in his favor failed at the first testing, and entailed death upon his race, sin, death, and judgment, the heirloom of his family.

This blessed Man will have His reward. “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf shall not wither and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” As man He receives this reward. And we may notice here that the remnant (just named in the last verse) have the same character of blessing though He alone in its fullness; and indeed their blessing is given to them for altogether a different reason, as Jeremiah declares (17:7, 8), “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought neither shall cease from yielding fruit.” This looks onward to millennial peace and joy. Israel restored will enter into the joy of their King, their prosperity will take its color from His joy. The land itself shares in blessing described in the same way, no doubt if a figure for man, it is literal for the land, “And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed; it shall bring forth new fruit according to its months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine” (Ezek. 47). When men and the land are so blessed, then will the tree of the first Psalm flourish. It is His portion as the perfect Man, theirs as those who trust in Him.

“The ungodly are not so.” Nebuchadnezzar on the throne was a tree (see Dan. 4:22), but his leaf faded. For a brief moment prosperity shone upon him; where is he now and his glory? “But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.” Alas! it is the ungodly in Israel the Psalm speaks of, and the prophet Hosea (13:3) pronounces the same judgment upon Ephraim, “Therefore they shall 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.”

The day is coming when He shall flourish as the tree, and the chaff be driven away by fiercer winds than the ungodly have yet known. What day is that? Not that day when the dead shall stand before the great white throne, but when Christ comes to judge the living. Its commencement will be when He appears with His saints, and will continue till the wicked are consumed from off the land, for they “shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.” The Psalm goes beyond this judgment and gives a glimpse of the godly remnant who will then be the congregation of the righteous. “All thy children shall be taught of Jehovah” (see Isa. 54:13, 14, also 65:20). No sinner shall endure among them. At that time the “Blessed Man” will have the joys and prosperity described under the figure of the tree planted by the rivers of water.

The flourishing tree of this Psalm is no symbol of the gospel in its dispensational aspect. For the preacher now, like the prophet of old, may indeed cry, “Who hath believed our report?” Christendom outwardly receives, virtually denies, the gospel. Christendom as read in its most popular writers teaches “another gospel which is not another.” Its doom is near, its last stage is being developed, whose features are becoming plainer with awful rapidity. And then “I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Neither the worldly spreading of the Christian name nor the saving power of Christ's name in the hearts of believers are referred to in this Psalm by the flourishing tree, but the earthly glory of Christ when the earth is purged (Matt. 13:41-43).

Three classes are before us in this Psalm. The perfect Man, the ungodly, and the righteous. In the first there could be but One. His perfection is intrinsic, and is in absolute contrast with the ungodly. Then the righteous, the associates of the perfect and blessed Man. These have a relative righteousness, and He calls them the excellent of the earth, in whom He delights (Psa. 16:3). These will rejoice in the day when the “tree” shall flourish, and will share in His prosperity. These take their character from Him. He is the “tree” whose leaf never fades; they are, through their association with Him, “trees” of righteousness. And when they are established in the land and have become a nation, they too will delight in the law of God. The clean water will have been sprinkled, the new heart will have been given (Ezek. 36). For then will have come the acceptable year of Jehovah, “that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that He might be glorified.”

Grace has given us a better portion; yet it is not less grace that will thus exalt Israel in the coming day. As the prophet said and the apostle repeated, “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” Not so the perfect Man. He needed no grace, He never failed. And looking at the demands of law and of government, which being God's government must be according to inflexible justice, none but He could be entitled to the full blessedness of the first Psalm. He delighted in the law, and God delighted in Him.

Where is a more striking contrast between the prosperity of the righteous and the destruction of the ungodly than the stable tree and the driven chaff? Eternal doom is not the thought here though it does lead our thoughts on to it. The final triumph of righteousness and the putting down of all ungodliness for the earth is the theme of these two Psalm and declares the righteousness of God in government. Hence grace as proclaimed in the gospel is not found here. No call to repentance (Psa. 2:10 is rather a warning), no promise of forgiveness to the guilty on his confession, nor of restoration to a failing saint. Righteousness and reward are linked together, so also are ungodliness and judgment. Man's probationary term had not yet expired, he was not yet proved to

be lost and dead, and therefore the time was not yet come for the fullest display of grace. Man's utter rain and God's richest grace are revealed together. Two great facts, the second death and eternal life. The law contemplates neither. It tested man declaring what he should be and making bare what he is; it therefore necessarily takes its form from man's condition. It is holy, just, and good, and demanded that righteousness which Jesus the blessed Man and He alone did present to God.

“For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous.” Here the righteous (not one but many; in the Sept. the word is plural) are distinct from “the Man.” Jehovah knows their way, but the way of the ungodly shall perish. The knowing and the perishing placed side by side as here means destruction for the ungodly and preservation for the righteous; yea, a moral approval of the righteous, but does not rise to the height of God's delight in the blessed Man.

(Continued from page 37.)

Chapter 146

Thoughts on Psalm 1-2: Part 3

The second Psalm brings us at once to the time of the end of man's role when Jehovah has risen up to take vengeance upon the despisers and slayers of His Anointed. The King—God's King—is come to sit upon His own throne, and He finds the whole world in arms against Him. “The heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against His Anointed.” The Gentile and the Jew unite and say, “Let us break their bands (the bands of Jehovah and His Anointed) asunder, and cast away their cords from us.”

There was a little picture of this confederacy when the priests and Pilate and Herod were united against Christ. For then the kings of the earth had their representative in Pilate, and the rulers of the people both ecclesiastical and secular in the priests and Herod. They then imagined a vain thing against Him, though in crucifying Him they seemed to succeed.

But the fall expression of the hatred and confederacy is yet to come. The intermediate time between the presence of the blessed man here below as in the first Psalm and His advent to take vengeance is passed over. Christ is now hidden from the world and seated on His Father's throne. The second Psalm opens with the aspect of the world when this present exceptional period of grace is closed. But the chief point is the condition of the Jew; the heathen and the kings of the earth fall under a heavier judgment inasmuch as they are the aiders and abettors, yea the rulers of the Jews in their last and greatest rebellion against Jehovah and His Anointed. For both these names have special reference to Israel. If Jehovah were the only name of God, if Anointed and Son of David were the only names of Jesus, there would be no salvation for Gentiles. The Syro-Phoenician woman had no blessing while calling upon Him as Son of David. When she said Lord, there was a leading word; when she took the place of a dog, she had the blessing she sought. Here in this Psalm truly, is the Anointed King Whose authority and power extend over all the kings of the earth, but He is established in Zion. Zion is the central point, the place of His throne (see Psa. 48).

All take counsel together. How vain! Not less vain when He came to save, not to judge; though only believers can see how necessary is His death to victory and salvation. But when He comes to judge, the enemies will see how vain their thought to set at naught His authority and power. “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, Jehovah shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure.” Rage as may the kings in their impotency, the rulers are but grasshoppers before Him, and Jehovah says “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” The speakers change, and Messiah Himself takes up the word. “I will declare the decree, Jehovah hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

The Lord Jesus when down here had this relationship of “Son,” and spoke from it. No word more frequent in His mouth than “My Father.” And this not only referring to His Eternal Sonship—the Son co-equal with the Father—but to His humanity. He was as Man the Son of God, “That holy thing.” Jehovah, long before Messiah's birth, declared Him to be the Son of God; and when He came, He lived and spoke in this conscious relationship. The decree is His universal supremacy. “Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.” The Lord Jesus takes this place of universal authority and of possession, as Son saying, “All things are delivered unto Me of My Father.” And when about to leave this world for a season He said to His Father—a greater work than taking the kingdom of this world and sitting on the throne of David being then in view, the formation of a heavenly people— “I pray not (I ask not now) for the world” (John 17), in evident allusion to the promise of Jehovah in this Psalm. Not then, nor yet has He asked. The hour approaches when He will ask; for there is a term to His long-suffering and patience, and then comes the judgment. “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.” This power is His now, though not yet put forth in judgment. “All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18). The judgment of the world is committed to Him (Acts 17:31). And when He comes to put forth that power, even the saints—the overcomers—shall under Him shepherd the nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:26, 27). For the present this power is manifested for the purposes of grace and salvation; and this present period (though iniquity was never so rampant, and rebel man never so defiant of God)—yet this present is the time of God's greatest joy. For of all the ages of the world never was such grace seen, never were such blessings conferred as God is now showing; and this is His joy. He gave the Lord Jesus power and authority for this end, viz. His joy. “As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.” When all the “given” ones are with the Lord, then will come the judgment of the enemies. The Psalm looks onward to this judgment of the quick when the heirs are taken out of the scene.

What a gracious time is the present! For the decree of judgment is enrolled among the immutable counsels of God, and not less sure than the exaltation of the Son as King in Zion. But His exaltation to the throne of universal dominion is delayed, and the judgment of the ungodly is held in check that the authority which the Lord Jesus has may be used in giving eternal life to those whom the Father brings to Him. Is not this patient waiting? The long-suffering of the Lord is salvation. And “salvation” is the word which gives the character of this present day, as judgment will of the coming day. For then there will be unsparing retribution upon those who have taken counsel against Him and who will be taken, as it were, red-handed in their guilt. None escape; Israel and the Gentile, the people and the heathen, all who are confederated in rebellion will feel the power of God's King when He sits on His throne in Zion. It is grace while He is on the Father's throne.

The same scene and the same parties, contemplated in the Psalm, appeared to the Seer, who foretells the same judgment. “Associate yourselves, O ye peoples, and ye shall be broken in pieces: and give ear, all ye of far countries; gird yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together and it shall come to naught; speak the word and it shall not stand; for God is with us.” The people—the bulk of the nation are in league with the heathen, but He is with the little remnant; and because they can say “God is with us” the prophet challenges the confederacy of the wicked with scorn. “Associate yourselves,” let

Israel and the Gentile join hand in hand, nevertheless “ye shall be broken.” At the same time there is a warning word to the godly, “Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy: neither fear ye their fear nor be afraid” (Isa. 8). The nation is to be in league with the Beast of the West, whose protection they seek against the King of Assyria—the overflowing scourge. But though the Assyrian is to oppose Israel and their allies, all are as one in opposition to God's King. And at His hand they all are to meet their doom.

Awful is the character of this confederacy as given by the same prophet. It is an alliance with a power which is of Satan; its diabolical source unsuspected, hidden from their eyes. “Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death and with hell are we at agreement, when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves” (Isa. 28:14 &c., &c). They knew not that the Dragon had given his power to the Beast; but such is the fact, and God by the prophet declares the people to be associated with death and hell—reveals it to those among them who have ears to hear. It is a warning that all the scorners and the heathen shall be overthrown with an irretrievable destruction. “The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.”

The Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Christ in the Psalmist—again takes up the word, “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.”

Alas vain is the call to wisdom. The coming day will find Israel and the nations, as the prophet predicts. It will be hell and earth in league against the King appointed by God. The North, the South, the Beast and Israel apostate may be all embroiled; but each is opposed to Christ. It is according to God's ways to give warning. Not one lost soul (at least within the limits of Christendom) but has heard at one time or another the warning voice of Him who must punish the wicked, so that all are without excuse. Even Judas the traitor was warned, but had no ear for it, no heart to feel the Master's sorrow. “Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall deliver Me up.” Captive of his own covetousness and baseness, Judas heeds not the word, his hard heart is untouched. The sop is given and reveals him to the other disciples, and Satan enters into him. Too late, forever too late to retrace his fatal path, Satan possesses him. Then, not before, the Lord dismisses him, and bids him do his evil work quickly. And immediately he went out—went out into the “night,” but carrying a night of far blacker darkness in his own soul. Even he was warned. The warning and then announcement of sure judgment is even now already gone forth to the actors in the last days. “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings.” They are counseled to serve Jehovah with fear, yea to kiss—pay homage to—the Son. The nations that share in millennial blessedness are not to be brought through Christ to the knowledge of the Father as He is revealed to us now. To Christ, the exalted Man, they must bow, Who in His own Person is the revelation of the majesty and power and rule of God, until He delivers up the kingdom to God even the Father (1 Cor. 10 v. 24).

There was a glimpse of this glory of the kingdom on the mount of transfiguration. It was too much for the three disciples, who were overpowered and became heavy with sleep. The Lord prayed

that we might behold even higher glory. He will soon be revealed; we shall not sleep then but be fitted to gaze upon Him in all His glory and brightness.

It is not yet the day of His magnificent glory; He is still waiting on the Father's throne, and while there, we honor Him even as we honor the Father, but the world disbelieves and dishonors Him. In the day of His revelation, all flesh, kings and slaves, princes, judges, and common people, all together must pay homage to Him. For every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess Him; every creature in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth, all shall confess Jesus Christ to be Lord. And His Lordship, His universal rule as the exalted Man, is to the glory of God the Father.

Grace bows our hearts now, and with joy we confess His name! Judgment will in that day break the proud spirit of the enemy. When His wrath is kindled but a little—the beginning of His judgment, they perish from the way. “And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day” (Isa. 2:17).

(Continued from page 53.)

Chapter 147

Thoughts on Psalm 1-2: Part 4

As in the first Psalm we find the righteous apart from the blessed Man and from the ungodly, so here we find them a distinct company apart from the anointed, and from the raging heathen and the people. “Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” But if the same three classes appear in the second Psalm as in the first, how notable the different character in which each appears. For the perfect and blessed Man of the first is the exalted Man and crowned King of the second; the ungodly, the sinners and the scorners of the first have made way for the confederated kings who take counsel together against Jehovah and against His Anointed; they are the leaders of the scornful men and their representatives. The “righteous” of the first (ver. 6) are seen in the “blessed” of the second. Introduced in these two Psalms they all are in view throughout the book, save the closing scene where, in the great hallelujah of praise from blessed men and renovated creation, the wicked are nowhere.

Why are they called “blessed?” Why, the same word as applied to the perfect Man? Not because they are perfect as He, but because they trust in Him. His blessedness is the fruit of His own perfection, theirs is also due to Him for He overshadows them with His wing. “Trust” suggests the thought of a time of trial, sorrow and patience, and prepares us somewhat for the sudden transition from the glories of the second Psalm to the trouble with which the third opens. And the wonderful fact is that He who is the object of their trust is Himself deeper in the trouble than they possibly could be. But He must have pre-eminence in suffering as in righteousness and glory.

Theirs is the blessedness of the sorrowing remnant who are admitted to share in little measure the trouble of Him in whom they trust. As the second bridges over the space from the blessed Man here below to the scene of His glory hereafter, so the third takes us back again to the sorrows of His lonely path. For though a few clave to Him, in the depths of His sorrow He was truly alone. They little knew the sorrow that was breaking His heart. Even when told of the inevitable cross (through His grace), they could not receive it. The sources of His sorrow were beyond their ken, although the prophet had declared it; “behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith Jehovah hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger” (Lam. 1:12).

While kings are bidden to submit themselves to Him, they that trust in Him are pronounced blessed. Though He went down to the depths, despised, mocked, and cut off from His inheritance, still to trust in Him was the sure and only way to this blessedness. When the Lord was here, His disciples trusted in Him up to a certain point. But when they saw Him in the hands of the priests and the rulers, then they all forsook Him and fled. Death was a strain upon their trust which they were not prepared for; and indeed it is too great a strain for faith short of resurrection-faith, which however was not then given to them. Resurrection must first be a fact: after that faith builds upon it. For the moment, every hope was gone from their hearts and sorrow filled the vacant place. The two going to Emmaus tell their griefs to each other, and to a stranger (supposed) lament and say, “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.” Others of them return to their

fishing. But when death was, as they imagined, stamped upon all their hopes and expectations, their hopes appear again in a brighter and eternal aspect. Jesus appears to them alive from the dead, and the glory of the kingdom, yea, and every other glory, is firmly established in power through His resurrection. It is an immovable basis, the necessary basis; for as it behooved Christ to suffer these things (even death) to enter into His glory, so must He also rise. The foundation of trust in Him cannot again be shaken Its security is the death and resurrection of Christ, but this is not named in our Psalm. Messiah's exaltation is the theme, and whatever the pathway, though it be through deepest troubles, it is Jehovah's decree and must be accomplished. And as surely will those who trust in Him be blessed.

It is the godly remnant who are here in view. The “righteous” in the first Psalm, and the “blessed” in the second. They are called “blessed,” not because of aught in themselves, but because they trust in Him. Under the first name “righteous” we read that Jehovah knows their way. Their path of sorrow as depicted in Psalms that follow was known to God; and this contains a store of comfort to the tried and suffering remnant. Jehovah watched over their way for the sake of the blessed Man Who trod the same path, going before them, and thus leading them through it. The way is appointed, and known, to God; the termination is blessing, and that also is decreed. To the understanding heart the closing verses of each of these Psalms embody a sure and certain promise which is abundantly performed when we see at the close of the book the righteous remnant exalted as a nation, and their enemies destroyed.

We know that all blessing is connected with faith both in the coming day for Israel as for the believer in this present time. Christ is faith's object for them as for us. But of us it is said, “Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith even the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:8, 9). This is our present blessedness. They (the remnant) shall receive their salvation when they see Him. In the tremendous scenes of the coming day they will say, “Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is Jehovah, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation” (Isa. 25:9). He comes not only to execute judgment upon the heathen and upon the guilty people, but also to bring salvation to the trusting ones. All the past will be reversed (see Isa. 61 and Joel 2:21-27). They will rejoice not merely in their change of circumstances, however great and marvelous, but even as while waiting they trusted and are blessed, so when they see they will shout “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” They will joy in Him. The blessedness of trusting characterizes them before deliverance comes. What will it be when He comes and accomplishes the promises of God for them?

This blessedness has special reference to the godly remnant in the last days. But as it is a blessedness which accompanies faith, we and all saints in all times can partake of the blessing which faith brings. And for ourselves, the trust here spoken of is not so much the faith that reveals the Savior to the sinner—though that faith need not be excluded—as the trust and confidence in the Christ of those who wait for His coming, and who are rejoicing in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5). And we know how blessed it is to trust in Christ, surrounded as we are by enemies who, for a little while, are even now in their impotency raging against Christ, if not against His person (there are some who do) yet against His truth. But is not the denial of the truth an implicit denial of His person? To trust in Him is our strength, victory and present joy. We wait for Him, not to be preserved through the judgment, not to triumph over foes on the earth, but to be taken away

hidden in the Father's house while He is purging His kingdom and taking away all things that offend. We shall be there till the tempest be overpast.

These two Psalms are introductory to the whole book. They present the person of Him who is the constant theme throughout, either in His own person, or by His spirit in the remnant. In the first Psalm, His inherent perfection as a Man; then in the second, His official glory and power as King in Zion. The rest of the book tells first of His sufferings, and of the righteous to whom Be joins Himself; then of His final exaltation and their consequent triumph. The perfection has appeared, and His sufferings are past. The glory has not yet. appeared. He is not yet manifested as the tree with the unfading leaf (save to the redeemed who look with the eye of faith). He was and is still to unbelieving Israel as a root out of a dry ground. The Gospels give us historically the circumstances in which He was found. For the Jew He had no form nor comeliness, no beauty that they should desire Him. He was despised and rejected. Therefore He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The Psalms unfold these sorrows, not in the ferns of an historical record, but as the experiences of His soul. Some are incommunicable, all are as to their depth and intensity, but some as to their nature, as when forsaken on the cross, made sin and bearing its judgment. For who but He could bear it and afterward rise from the grave in victory? His suffering of death from the hand of God is infinitely apart from the sufferings of the remnant and from ours. In what He endured from man the godly remnant have a share, and the church now has fellowship in His sufferings as the object of the world's hate. Paul tasted of, yea, gloried in them, more perhaps than any other man; yet not even he knew them as did Christ. The suffering remnant as seen in the Psalms have not Paul's faith and hope and joy. Their sufferings have an element peculiar to themselves. Messiah went through all. To believers now, it is a privilege to suffer with Christ. To the remnant it is righteous and governmental discipline. And through the suffering partaking of this governmental character, in grace went Christ, the perfect man, the future King. “In all their affliction He was afflicted” (Isa. 63:9), yea in it was more afflicted than they. It is beyond the capacity of mere man to feel as He felt. The remnant of Israel are called to taste of His sorrows and experiences as far as they are capable, and which it is necessary they should under the disciplining hand of God. And they are given to feel in measure with Him that they may feel aright and that He may form their thoughts and words, their prayers and confessions, and supply them with faith and confidence i.e., He communicates to them all that in their circumstances is acceptable to God.

But how infinitely acceptable was His own life and obedience. Although in the same circumstances as they, there shines out, in all His own immaculate purity, His perfection. He was separate from sinners, yet He wept not only for them, but with them, and made confession of sins for them as if they were His own; so intimately did He join Himself to His people. He took upon Himself their burdens and bowed under them. He bore their stripes and they are healed. He was cut off and had nothing. Consider Him, the perfect man yet sorrowing, the righteous man yet bearing judgment, the blessed man yet going to the cross, the true king yet cut off from His inheritance. The prophet said His name should be called “Wonderful.” His presence in this world was wonderful; His words, His deeds and beyond all else His death proclaim Him “the Wonderful:” we bow in adoring love and praise.

What more fitting introduction to these experiences of sorrow and humiliation than the perfection of His humanity and Jehovah's decree that He should sit upon His throne in Zion?

In that day many crowns will be His, “and on His head were many crowns” (Rev. 19:12). He will be crowned as the perfect man, the leader and chief of the godly remnant, the head of the church. These He wears now. Soon He will sit upon the throne of Israel in Zion, soon He will be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords, when the glorious prophecy in Psa. 72 shall be literally accomplished. But there is one glory which takes precedence of all these, it is the greatest and brightest of all. These crowns bespeak His relations with man, with the creature. The highest is His because He as man vindicated the name of God in a world of sin and blasphemy. Divine judgment is not set aside, but the full tide of mercy's living waters flows fully and freely. He abased Himself even to a malefactor's death to secure the vindication of a just and holy God which is a higher thing than man's redemption and necessarily takes precedence. And the Holy Spirit notes His deep self-abasement for this end, and on account of which He is highly exalted. “Wherefore” says the apostle “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 of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:7-11).

Saints, holy angels bow now; in His humiliation even demons feared the power of the name of Jesus. Believers bow and worship; unbelievers still reject. Soon they will be compelled to confess Him Lord of all. That name is the glory of heaven, and though now rejected by the world, shall soon be its boast also. “O Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth” (Psa. 8).

Many crowns! and with the glory and honor, with the shining forth of His majesty then will be the tokens of His grace. “In the midst of the throne and of the four beasts and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain” (Rev. 5:6). His humiliation, sufferings, death will shine as brilliants set in crowns of gold.

R. B.

(Concluded from page 69.)

Chapter 148

The Psalms and Christ

In the Psalm when sufferings from men are spoken of, vengeance is always called for by the speaker. In Christ's life historically there never was a trace of this, but the contrary. On the cross He prays that they may be forgiven; as in His lifetime He rebuked the disciples for thinking of it, not knowing what Spirit they were of. It is evident that this is of the greatest weight in our judgment of the manner of application to Christ.

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Chapter 150

Rationalism Superficial

There is nothing more characteristic of infidelity than superficiality. It never gets beyond the bark and shell of the divine fruit of the word. In the midst of the most admirable development of divine ways, it will stop to complain that the numberings of Israel and Judah are not the same in Samuel and Chronicles. How, they ask, do you account for this? Suppose I answer (though in this case there is not much difficulty) I cannot account for it at all, I should not be a bit the worse off. I have a positive proof of perfect divine wisdom in the book and in all its details; for these details give to the whole the character it has. Man's estimate of things, partly influenced by the Spirit of God—his thoughts, his feelings, the evil, the rebellions, the faults, the unbelief and the way God met it—all go to make up the picture of what man was before God, and the scene of God's dealings in mercy and truth with men, till, as it is expressed, mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other. Every detail lost would be a loss of the completeness. Some trait would fail of these wonderful unfoldings of what man is in relationship with God.

If my intelligence of some of the details fails me, I cannot account for some phenomenon, I lose something of course—some proof of completeness. The dealings of God, however, have not disappeared. I cannot in this case explain some particular point, nor solve an apparent discrepancy in a number. I pity the person whose perception of the perfectness of all is hindered by a difficulty he cannot explain. To my mind the greatest part of these difficulties is the fruit of the ignorance and traditional views of the objectors. I may not be able to solve, and God may try our faith by, some such things, through the human weakness of those to whom these divine oracles were entrusted; but He will always answer and bless our faith.

Take the Petrine, Pauline, and Johannean characters in which parts of the divine revelation were thrown. Of the beauty and moral harmony, of the goodness of God in this, of the enormous gain and advantage to us, which fill the believer's mind, they have not the smallest perception. They can only spell out possible historical inconsistencies, and think of the books as the fruit of some ecclesiastical intrigues to reconcile Christian factions, or give the authority of apostolic names to cover resistance to heresies come in long after. That God in perfect love to man should give in one instruction how far the Christian, redeemed from the world, should, as a pilgrim in it, be connected with its government by God as more directly displayed in the O. T., as Peter does; that man presented to God in righteousness and resurrection, with conferred privileges in heaven, should be developed in Paul; that the blessed revelation of God Himself (as it is expressed, No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him), and of eternal life in Him in all its nature and qualities, should be given in John: all this is lost on them. They are trying to prove it imposture, or reconcile dates, or discuss the possible author, provided nobody pretend it to be genuine. There is an incapacity to perceive the divine which is difficult to conceive. Yet it is useful.

Happily the most advanced of these wise men are so entirely unhistorical that they have no credit with sober minds, even with those who are not much affected by the divine. English theologians

are so shut up in traditional lore, that they think rationalists have upset all inspiration, if they overthrow their own traditions; just as a poor Roman Catholic often turns infidel, if he comes to think a bit of bread is not the body, blood, soul, and divinity of the Lord Jesus.

Chapter 151

Review of Newberry's Companion 7:56

Companion to the Englishman's Bible, by Thomas Newberry. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 27, Paternoster Row, E.C. (pp. 45).

This slender quarto consists of eleven chapters, meant to illustrate and explain the value of his Englishman's Hebrew O. T., and Greek N. T., as far as can be for those who do not know the original tongues. The reader will find in the work not a few profitable hints conveyed in a clear and compact manner. Mr. N. is not a little attached to the Text. Rec. and the A.V., and indisposed to go with the Revisers in their admiration of their own work.

Chapter 152

The Saving Grace of God

God has not left us in darkness as to our state, nor as to His ways in grace towards us as in that state. The blessed truth of His coming in love to this world, before He comes in judgment, is a testimony to our state, but also to the love of God towards us in that state; and, if we neglect this testimony, we have to come before Him in judgment. “Every knee shall bow;” but there is all the difference between bowing to Him as a Savior, and as a Judge. If we come to Him in grace as a Savior, we find our sins dealt with in another way than judgment. If my creditor comes to claim a debt, and I have nothing to pay, it is all over with me; but if one comes to pay it, I am clear. And we must have to do with God in one way or the other: if, as having our sins dealt with on the cross, this is putting them away; if in judgment, this is imputing them to us.

The gospel is the testimony of what God has done before the day of judgment, that man might not have to answer for his sins—because Christ has already.

God cannot approve of iniquity—that is impossible; but it is very different to insist upon the payment of a debt, and to come and pay it. The gospel is the testimony of what Christ did as Savior before He returns as Judge; and this testimony is for us to believe.

There is the work of the Spirit of God which gives us a sense of our sins; the work done outside us by which they are put away; and the testimony of the Holy Ghost giving us the knowledge of that work. For, if it was unknown, I should be as uncomfortable as before.

We see in this scene what the human heart is when fully brought out (for it does not always show itself). We see, too, a work in a man, as well as a work for a man; and then the consciousness of it wrought in his soul. God makes us to know forgiveness; He has not given His Son that we should be ignorant of it. I cannot talk of walking with God, if I do not know whether He is going to condemn me, or not: you never heard of a criminal walking with his judge!

In looking at this scene, you will see how all were against the Lord Jesus. And why? He had healed their sick, cast out demons, raised the dead, so that Pilate could say, “Why; what evil hath He done?” I cannot call myself a Christian without saying that the world has crucified the Son of God. And the terrible thing is, all His works showed Who was there. God had said, “I have yet one Son; may be they will reverence Him when they see Him” But this revelation of what God is only brought out the enmity, and now God has to say to the world, What have you done with My Son? What has He done to you? Nothing but good. Then why spit in His face, and crucify Him? If any one had done so yesterday to my mother, could I go and be “hail-fellow, well-met,” with him to-day? Man has done this; and when the light comes in, he confesses he has done it, and that he cannot answer one charge in a thousand.

The world is under judgment: we all know the world will come to an end; we all know it, and yet we go on with it!

The law comes to tell man what he ought to be: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart;” “Thou shalt not covet.” But I know I have not loved God, and I have lusted. I have broken the law in every particular; if I offend in one point, I am guilty of all. It is very simple. If I tell my child not to do three things, he may not care one bit to do two of them, but he does the third, which he really cares about. A man must be a monster of iniquity to have committed all the sins in the world!

If you apply the law, “there is none righteous, no, not one.” God does not say this in the day of judgment, but in the day of grace He warns you. He tells us beforehand in mercy what His judgment as to us is. If He were sitting on the great white throne, could it be any plainer than we read it in Rom. 3? Can a man stand up after that, and say, I am righteous? Is this the way to meet God? Is He a liar?

People talk about mercy, which means that they hope God will think as little about their sins as they do. A man has committed, say, ten sins, and yet he hopes to go to heaven; if he has committed eleven, he thinks this is not too much; if a hundred, he hopes still: he has no thought of holiness. One sin shuts out from God; but the door is not shut to any, if they own their sins. If I am set to wash this table, it is not a question whether there are five spots or fifty; but can I wash it well?—

Man only mocks the blessed Son of God; every detail of this scene gives us a picture of what man's heart is. Man is never ashamed of a false religion. A Mahometan will say his prayers in the market; and if you are making a bargain with him, you may wait till he has done. A Hindu is not ashamed of the worship of his gods. But a Christian is ashamed of Christ; and so the Lord says, “Whosoever will confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father and the holy angels.”

The chief priests, who were set to intercede for weakness, cry out for His blood. Pilate, who was to judge the guilty and protect the innocent, washes his hands of the innocent. His own disciples flee from Him.

If two men are hung together, when did you ever hear of one insulting the other, unless he had brought him into the trouble? But when we come to Christ, there it is. The human heart is enmity against God. The moment they get the opportunity, they all trample upon Him. Thank God, He was there in grace; but it shows what our hearts are. We all know some are criminal and vicious, and some are not. But the prodigal son was as truly a sinner when he crossed his father's threshold, as when he was eating the husks; and that is where we all are.

Do not you like doing your own will? Do not you see it in your children? You find it out in them. And this is what sin is. The law condemns it, but it condemns me too. Do not fancy that it only condemns the sins; it says, “Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.”

The law only shows what we ought to do, but does not tell us what we are. If I apply a right rule to a person who has cheated me, what does it do? Condemn him. The law does not give life, it gives no help, but only a measure of what a child of Adam ought to be. God tells us what we are, and He tells us before the day of judgment comes, that we may lay it to heart and find the remedy. When Christ came, He put His sanction upon all that, for it was His own law; but He came in quite the opposite way. The law claimed the debt; Christ paid it; and this is grace! “God was in Christ,

reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." God came into the world because we were sinners; He did not stay in heaven and say, You behave well, and it will be well in the end; but He came down because we were all wrong.

Who put it into God's heart to give His Son? Did you? Did the world? Was it not in God's own heart to do it? He so loved the world, that He gave His Son. I can trust God's heart more than I can trust my own: there is no inconsistency in His heart; He is not double-minded, and I know His thoughts concerning me.

But more than that—Christ died for us. Why should I go to pull a person out of a ditch, if he is not in it? Why did He taste death? Because we were under death. Why take the cup of wrath? Because we were under judgment. What was all His sorrow about? My sin. Oh! I say, what unutterable love! and what a sinner I must be! It gives honesty of heart, not excusing ourselves, like Adam, hiding our sins if we can, and, if not, excusing them.

If a man comes to pay my debts, I take care to bring up every farthing I owe. The effect of God's love is to give honesty of heart. I believe His love; I am glad to tell Him everything, or rather to know that He knows, and that I need not tell Him, though I do. He has come to clear us completely, and this produces honesty, instead of concealment.

God is light and love, and He must be both wherever He comes. He comes in light, and shows me where I am; and He comes in love to forgive.

Look at the poor woman who was a sinner. There was one heart in the world she could trust, and that was Christ's heart. Did she bide her sins? No; she came weeping and confounded about them; but she trusted Him—she trusted the love that brought the light to her. Take Peter in the ship. He fell down before Christ, and says, Depart from me! What did he go to Him for, then? He was drawn to Him by the sense of what He was, and, when there, felt he was not fit to be there. The Pharisee said, This man is not a prophet. He was so dark though he had got God in his house, that he could not find it out: the poor woman did.

Let us look at this crucified robber. There was the work in him, and the work for him. What does he say? The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom; it is the sense of what God is. He says, "Dost thou not fear God?" Then he confesses his sins; he owns he is suffering justly. The light had got into his soul.

We have been saying the world is wicked, and so it is; but when the light comes, one says, I am wicked. An honest conscience owns its sins: "we [suffer] indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our sins." Then, "This Man hath done nothing amiss." How did he know that? Had he ever been with Christ? He was taught of God; he could guarantee that Christ never did a wrong thing. Do your hearts pass their word for it that He never could? Has He been sufficiently revealed to your hearts for you to feel this?

Then he owns Him as King! Here is a strange thing. The chief priests and heads of the people were all mocking Him; His disciples had run away. What sign of Lordship was there? The only comforter the Lord had upon the cross was this poor robber! "Remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom." He was dying the death of the gibbet. The sign that God had come into the world was a babe lying in a manger; He ended it on a cross; and all the way through He had not where

to lay His head. What faith in this poor robber! No matter, if all the world was against Him; He was a King all the same; and the robber can say, You will come in Your kingdom.

What was he thinking of? He was in an agony of pain on the cross, but he does not say, “Save Thyself and us.” He owned He was Messiah, but does not ask Him to spare him one bit of pain—only “Remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.”

How could he have such confidence in Him Who was crucified? But what the light always does is to give confidence. Messiah remember a robber, who had just owned he was suffering justly! Can you trust Him like that, honestly confessing your sins, but trusting in God's heart when you own them? Do you trust Christ's heart? If you cannot, you do not know Him, for He is trustworthy.

God gives us striking examples that they may strike us. All are not robbers, but it is really the same thing for us all. Have your hearts had Christ so revealed to them, that, honest in your conscience before God, you trust God when you know what you are? See again the poor woman trusting Christ with all her sins before her. This is not so easy always; for, if our sins are before us, we reason, and wonder whether God will receive us. Are you wondering how God will receive you? Then you have not met Him yet, or you would know bow. When the prodigal came to his father, he said nothing about, “Make me as one of thy hired servants.” And why not? Because his father was on his neck, kissing him, and treating him as a son.

The robber owns his sins, but trusts Him. And we get the Lord's answer “To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” Now is the Son of man glorified, “for to-day shalt thou be with Me.”

The robber was bearing the punishment of his sins from man; but who was bearing sins from God? The One Who hung beside him. “He bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” When I have confidence in Christ, I say, I must go to God, and I find Christ on the way; and what is He doing there? Judging me? No; bearing all my sins. There is the blessed One, Whom I have been despising all my days; and I see He has suffered for my sins, and borne my burden—He has taken them all, that I should not bear them. Trust Him, no matter how bad you are. If you cannot trust any man, trust Him.

If He has won my heart to this confidence, I find that He Who is going to be Judge has been dying for my sins; and how can He impute them to me I suppose of course, that I have owned and confessed my sins, and am coming to Him about them, God having dealt with them, and laid them upon Christ. I come beforehand to the seat of judgment, and I see in the Judge the Man Who bore all my sins. How, then, can I fear Him? I find that God, because of my sins, has given His Son to bear them all, like the scape-goat, into a waste land, not inhabited.

Christ's work for me is totally finished; but all is not finished in me. 1 ought to grow more like Him every day; but the work for me, as regards my guilt is finished; and if it is not perfectly finished, when is it to be? He cannot die again—cannot suffer again—cannot drink the dreadful cup again. He suffered once, and cannot more. That cup made Him sweat great drops of blood in only thinking about what it was to be made a curse for us; and this He cannot be made over again. He is set down because the work is done. How little men thought they were sending the poor robber straight to paradise, when they sent to break his legs!

And now about knowing it (for this is the important point), the Lord told him he was to be with Him that day. And was he to believe it?

It happened to him, but it was written for as. If I come to Him, I know He has finished the work and put my sins away. The work was done once for all, and, through the grace of God, brought to me. Knowing no other name under heaven whereby I can be saved, I find He has put my sins away, and I know it! He has gone back into the glory, because He has finished the work. The Holy Ghost brings it home to our hearts; for God says He has finished the work; as it is written in Rom. 4, “He died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification.” His resurrection is the proof that God has accepted the work. “If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins;” but if raised, He has borne them, and I am not in them.

What part had we in the cross?—I mean in bringing it about? Nothing but our sins, and the hatred that killed Christ—that is all! And this is what humbles us, and brings us, dependent on the grace of God, to say, My sins brought Him there; but God, instead of putting me away, put them away by Him.

Why is the gospel preached? Is it that we should know it, or that we should not? Christ has made peace; and how careful God is to show us this, that we may be happy! Defiled, I am cleansed; guilty, I am justified. You say, But I have offended God dreadfully. So you have; but there is forgiveness. God has not a thing against you: Christ has borne it all. He once got the fruit of my sins, and I have got the fruit of His work. If we come thus to God, the very Christ who put our sins away is the very Judge before Whom we shall appear. How do believers come before the judgment-seat? “Sown in dishonor, raised in glory.” Christ comes, and receives me to Himself. and this is the way I get to the judgment-seat. How can the believer fear, if, when he sees his Judge, he is like Him?

What opened the poor woman's heart in John 4? Not speaking the living water, but, “Go, call thy husband, and come hither.” Her heart was opened by her conscience being reached: If thou. knewest the grace of God—giving, and not imputing. If you knew Who it was—Who had come so low as to be dependent on a woman like you for a drink of water, you would have confidence in Him. And so would you, if you knew the Son of God come down to a manger and a cross; you would have confidence in Him and His salvation.

And this is what God is doing in Christ—winning back the confidence of man's heart, when He cannot trust him because of his sins. The love of God came into the world when men were in their sins; there was love enough in Christ to give Himself.

Do you believe that love? If so, there is the plain statement, “By Him all that believe are justified from all things.” He did not bear half, and leave me to perish by the other half.

When I come to Him, I find that, instead of meeting me in the day of judgment, He has met me in the day of grace. J. N. D.

Chapter 153

Scripture Imagery: 41. Judah's Speech and Wagon Verses Staff

Following immediately upon the pardon and justification illustrated in Gen. 43 we find the discipline and intercession in chap. 44.; and this is the natural order of events. Discipline and intercession characterize the period which lies between the forgiveness of sins and the public recognition, or the adoption, as it is termed in Rom. 8, in which chapter we have, whilst waiting for the said adoption, the intercession of the Spirit. Of course the Spirit may use human instruments; and it is an impulse of the Holy Ghost that Christians should intercede for one another. No one however was so fit and strong an intercessor amongst Israel's sons as Judah. He stood there as the head of the family (Reuben, &c. having been set aside) and as the voluntary surety: so Christ “bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Pray observe how an illustration easily removes a difficulty. Many find it difficult to understand why there should be any occasion for intercession with God, when He is in an attitude of perfect love towards us. Well, here Joseph was in an attitude of perfect love towards these forgiven sinners, and had fully made up his mind, from the beginning, to save and bless them: and yet how natural, how fit and comely, how beautiful and pathetic is Judah's noble, generous, and sublime intercession. It did not alter the final issue (though it may have hastened it), but it altered everything else. The reason Joseph recalled the men was to test if they were ready to give up Benjamin now in the same heartless way in which they had formerly given up their other brother; or if they were changed. Judah's speech is a complete answer to that: it showed that Joseph's patient disciplining and handling of them had been perfectly successful. By his generosity Joseph was saving his brethren; by his self-restraint and wise dealing with them he has changed their disposition. And now what takes place is calculated to awaken the finer and nobler instincts in all of them—to strengthen their mutual sympathy and deepen their mutual affection.

Judah's appeal is no empty rhetoric; he offers to give himself up to save Benjamin. This spirit of self-sacrifice characterizes all true intercession. “Blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book,” said Moses. “I could wish myself accursed,” said Paul. “Let me be slave instead of Benjamin” (in effect), says Judah. All these professed what they were willing to do: the wounds of Christ show what He has done. When Aschylus was being condemned at Athens, his brother Amynias came forward to advocate the cause of the prisoner. He bared his scarred chest and mutilated arm, the hand of which had been lost in the service of the state at Salamis.

When intercession is not a result of nobility of spirit, it is a cause of it and will tend to produce it. It is hardly possible to pray sincerely to God for another whilst continuing to hold hard or unworthy feelings toward the one for whom the prayer is made. The three kindred offices of intervention are thus distinguished. Mediation is “between God and men “—the Creator and the sinful creature. Intercession is on behalf of the reconciled man to God. Advocacy is exercised with the Father in the case of some definite failure.

When the men returned and told Jacob that Joseph was still alive, though he had before him the cumulative evidence of the eleven (besides, doubtless, many servants) “his heart failed and he

believed them not” —even when they told him “all the words of Joseph.” But when “he saw the wagons,” his spirit revived, and he said, “It is enough, I will go.” Those rude wooden conveyances were visible and tangible evidences of a brightened horizon and a new and glorious world, as yet unknown and unseen; and the sight of them confirmed his wavering mind, as Columbus and his companions were encouraged in their belief in that new unknown world which they sought through the weary waste of the wild Atlantic, when the “table board and carved stick” were drifted to the bow of the Santa Maria.

How true this is in the life of an “unbelieving believer “; that he is more confirmed by some slight and inconsequent outward evidence, some tangible and material gift from the Lord, than by the cumulative testimony of the eleven Apostles and all their followers. It is not creditable to us that such should be the case, when some passing providential physical gift, or answer to prayer, should confirm and encourage us more than the sacred words of Christ Himself; it indicates a low spiritual condition. That is the difference between faith and credulity. Faith reposes on the strongest evidence which the universe affords—the word of God (attested as being His word by overwhelming and cumulative testimony); but credulity, whilst not receiving that, will swallow any preposterous dogma that is accompanied by a geologist's chip of stone, or a priest's tonsure—anything from an ape-man to a monk's miracle. Faith floats, resting only on the waters of life; credulity grasps at a straw, and sinks.

Further on, we read that “Israel bowed himself on the staff.” (This would appear to be the correct reading of Gen. 47:31. The LXX have it thus, as also the Apostle in Heb. 11. The difference is simply in the vowel points, which would alter the word from mittah to matteh.) A great contrast with the wagon is the staff, which is an emblem of the word of God, as the support and defense of the soul. There must be importance in this apparently slight action of Jacob's, or we should not have had it twice recorded. The staff is connected with the rod in Psa. 23, “Thy staff and Thy rod they comfort me:” that is, not only is the supporting staff comforting, but the chastening rod is so-being a proof of a Father's love and care. The fact is that now Jacob returns to the simplicity of entire dependence on God. In the midst of his prosperity he had said that with only his staff he had set out and crossed Jordan, and that since then he had got great wealth. Now he is going to leave it all and come back to the bare staff; leaning on that alone he worships God. As Antaeus, when brought to the ground, uprose with increased vigor received from its contact; so Jacob, now brought down to the staff, receives an exaltation of spiritual power which closes his troubled and pathetic life in lofty praises and far-reaching prophecies.

Chapter 154

Scripture Imagery: 42. Jacob Crosses His Hands, Manasseh, Reuben

It is when the oyster in the Persian Gulf is wounded and dying that it forms the pearl; and Jacob's expiring exclamation is a priceless gem of wisdom and beauty. Dying utterances are sometimes characteristic of a whole life. Richard Baxter's last words were, “I have pain.....but I have peace.” Raleigh, feeling the headsman's ax, said, “It is a sharp medicine, but it cureth all sorrow “; Ignatius, “Yea, all torment which the devil can invent, so I may but attain Christ.” Diderot's last words were, “The first step towards philosophy is incredulity.” Gibbon said, “All is dark and doubtful “; Beethoven said, “I shall hear.” The polite Lord Chesterfield is reported to have last said, “Pray give Dayboles a chair “: Buonaparte, “Tête d'armée.” Julian the Apostate said, taking some of his blood and throwing it in the air, “Galilean, Thou hast conquered.” And Jacob's last words were similarly characteristic of his long and, on the whole, faithful life. Besides which they seem an inspired prophecy, and therefore come down carrying divine light through the centuries. If some fixed stars were plucked from their places, their light would still continue streaming down for ages afterward: Jacob was withdrawn, but his life and words still enlighten us.

But especially his words; for it sometimes occurs that a man of weak and imperfect character speaks with the eloquence of perfect wisdom. In extreme cases such inconsistency is repugnant, and the natural reflection suggested is, “Physician heal thyself.” Pope calls Bacon “the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind;” and of a celebrated preacher it was said, that when he was in the pulpit (he talked so well that) he never should go out; and when out of it (he “walked” so badly that) he never should go in. Demosthenes made such soul-stirring orations against Philip that the Greeks who heard him rose and cried for arms; but whilst they were using them, Demosthenes himself preferred to use his legs. Truth is however so valuable that no matter from whom it comes, we should not let the speaker's inconsistences hinder our reception of it. Halting, Jacob's life might have been; but his words were generally peculiarly wise, beautiful, and pathetic. Here at the close, as was feigned of the swan, “Death darkens his eyes and unplumes his wings, Yet the sweetest song is the last he sings."

Since he has come to lean on the bare staff he can neither say nor do anything amiss. Joseph brings Manasseh and Ephraim for his blessing, but the old patriarch crosses his hands, and reverses their order in the succession. The sign of the cross, traversing and reversing natural order and human expectations, is found here as everywhere—from the crucifers; up to the constellations. Children begin early making “naughts and crosses,” and find naughts and crosses to the end of life. “My thoughts are not as your thoughts,” God says; and this not because the divine thoughts are designed to be apart from or opposed to ours, but because they are right and we are wrong—we look at the eddies; He sees the stream.

Jeremy Taylor remarks on the strangeness of the idea of the cross. Indeed it is difficult now to understand the import of it to those of old time: it has actually reversed its own original meaning. Now, it is outwardly honored. It is set in precious gems above crown and tiara, orb and scepter; it is an object of worship to three hundred millions of civilized people. It surmounts the most

gorgeous and stately human edifices: magnificent cathedrals are built in its shape. It floats over land and ocean emblazoned on the standards of the most powerful nations. But then, when originally used, what was it a symbol of? A criminal's death, ghastly, agonizing, and degrading! Something far worse than what the gallows suggests now, for only slave-criminals were crucified.

Thus the shadow of the cross falls on all that follows. It transposes the members both of Jacob's and of Joseph's families, rejecting and selecting in a sovereign and final way, which sets aside human hopes and regulations. It selects Ephraim and Judah, and rejects Manasseh, Reuben, and others. If we are surprised as Joseph was, then the reply is, “I know it, my son, I know it.” It is absolute, and we must submit whether we understand its action or not. At the same time, if we consider in the light of subsequent events, we shall often find wise reasons for the peculiarity of that action. Manasseh's very name had an infirm suggestion in it, which was quite fulfilled in his half-hearted descendants: when they came to the Jordan, half of them stop short, and half go on: that was characteristic of the tribe, and the embryo of it may have been seen in Manasseh by Jacob, as the embryo of the irresolution of the tribe of Reuben was certainly seen by him in their head.

Of the latter he says, “Unstable as water,” and the simile is perfect. Water takes the color of anything adjacent, and the shape of everything with which it comes in contact. “Water,” says Burke, is insipid, inodorous, colorless, and smooth.....For as fluidity depends on the roundness, smoothness, and weak cohesion of the component parts of any body, it follows that the cause of its fluidity is likewise the cause of its relaxing quality—namely, the smoothness and slippery texture of its parts.” One would think that he was describing the character of the Reubens—all those who are accursed with infirmity of purpose, invertebrate mollusks, who have no more backbone than a jelly fish. When Joseph was in danger from his brothers, Reuben who should, as eldest, have protected him, does proceed so far as to say, “Shed no blood” —the thought of blood is repugnant to this tribe, especially in theology— “put him down this pit.” He meant to rescue him; but something always happens to upset a Reuben's good intentions. He means to be an upright man, no doubt, but falls into the terrible sin of which his father accuses him.

The tribe carries permanently that disease of vacillation. They decrease in the wilderness, and when they come to Jordan stop short, and, though they promised, and undoubtedly meant to go across and fight the battles of Israel, yet they never do so, but were the first to be led away captive by Hazael and Tiglath-pileser. After the great crisis, when the Israelites cast off the yoke of the Canaanites, by defeating Sisera's vast army, Deborah celebrates the victory in a lofty wean, distributing praise and blame. Ephraim and others receive honorable mention; Meroz is bitterly cursed for inaction; but Reuben is dismissed with one of the keenest satires that the stinging tongue of woman ever uttered. “For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart!” Hebrews “impressions.” “Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart!”

That was what Reuben gave when his brethren, in the agony of that mortal struggle, were giving their heart's blood, Reuben was giving his heart-searchings. Whilst Zebulun and Naphtali were “jeoparding their lives on the high places of the field,” in death clutch with a valiant foe, Reuben was amongst the sheepfolds, searching his heart as to what he ought to do—in the expressive American phrase, “sitting on the fence.” I expect he had nearly made up his mind about the time

that the battle was over. Well, it is a convenient way. And he has left many descendants.

Chapter 155

Scripture Imagery: 43. Reuben, Judah

There are two other features generally prominent in the Reuben character. One of them is the general misery of the irresolute mind: it is, while never effectively repentant, always remorseful for its weaknesses or neglected opportunities. When Reuben returned to the pit and found Joseph gone, “he rent his clothes and said, The child is not, and I, whither shall I go?” Tiberius seems to have been of the same irresolute mold, though no doubt a far worse man than Reuben. There is a very characteristic passage in a letter of his to the Roman Senate, in which he says that if he knows what to write to them, or how to write, or what not to write, may all the gods and goddesses torment him more than they are already tormenting him.

The other feature is the tendency of the irresolute man to use strong speech, and make vigorous promises. Indeed he may generally be distinguished by this alone: it is good counsel never to trust any one that uses habitual superlatives. Reuben wants his father to send Benjamin with him, and says, “Slay my two sons if I bring him not [back] to thee. That sounded very emphatic indeed—slay his own son—his two sons too! It is so vigorous that we are hardly left room for a mild inquiry as to who on earth wanted to slay his two sons, as to what consolation this would be to their already sorrowing grandfather; also a reflection, that the sacrifice he proposed was not of himself, but of a very vicarious nature; and finally, a desire to know what the two sons themselves thought on the subject.

What his father thought was soon shown: he says, “My son shall not go down with you.” He knew Reuben, “unstable as water;” and knew that the strength of his words was balanced by the weakness of his actions. He reversed the saying of the iron hand in the velvet glove, and transforms the motto to fort. in modo, suau. in re. Moses says, “Let Reuben live and not die; and let his men be few.”

Our translators, thinking there must be some mistake interjected the word not—let not his men be few. But Moses knew perfectly well what he was saying. Let Reuben live and not die, to just exist without expiring was all that could be expected or desired for him; but let his men be few—the fewer the better.

The contrast of Judah's character is very striking everywhere, and no where more than in the passage just referred to. Judah makes no large offers at the expense of his sons; what offer he makes is much more moderate, and at his own risk. “Send the lad with me. I will be surety for him.” Jacob instantly trusts to him and lets Benjamin go. In doing which he showed again his discernment of character; for Judah nobly redeemed his pledge of surety-ship, when he stood forth in Egypt and proffered himself as a substitute for Benjamin.

This was the nature of Judah, and also of Benjamin, who ever after remained closely associated. When the ten tribes fell away into Jeroboam's idolatry, these two tribes stood by themselves. And wherever their descendants are found to this day, something of that character pertains to them, their unconquerable determination and persistence—sometimes unhappily clinging to an evil or

mistaken course—and that through frightful and appalling persecutions. A lion is the metaphor used by Jacob in his blessing of Judah; and a lion was emblazoned on Judah's standard, the most appropriate figure possible of the power of a strong and determined mind. In Foster's “Decision of Character” there are passages where he contrasts the lion with the ox, as showing that while the lion is not so large, or strong, nor better armed than the ox, yet by reason of their different dispositions, whilst the ox can be driven anywhere, few dare interfere with the lion. “A man,” he proceeds, “who excels in the power of decision has probably more of the physical quality of a lion in his composition than other men.” The blessing of Moses on Judah is “Let his hands be sufficient for him;” and they generally have been—like that Norse family that Dellinger speaks of whose crest is a pickaxe, with the accompanying motto, “I will find a way or make one.” The order should be first deliberation, then action. The motto of Von Moltke is said to be, “Erst wagers, dann wagers,” first weigh, then venture. The moment that closes the decision begins the action.

In its highest forms this character is not to be shaken in its purpose, even amidst calamity, ruin, and disaster. Paul, looking forward to bonds and death, calmly says, “None of these things move me.” After the battle of Marathon, Cyneegirus seized one of the Persian boats which was pushing off from the shore. The Persians instantly lopped off his hand. He seized the boat then with the other, and they cut that off also: then he seized hold of it with his teeth.

Chapter 156

Scripture Imagery: 44. Judah, Issachar, Simeon, Levi

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet (from amongst his descendants) until Shiloh come.” This was remarkably fulfilled: the tribe always retained its cohesion and autonomy, even when in captivity, until “there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed,” rather enrolled for taxation. It was when the Jews were thus going to lose their nationality, and become merged as units into the Roman Empire—when Joseph and Mary had gone to their native town of Bethlehem for the very purpose of being registered as Roman subjects, that Messiah was born. Shiloh came. “And unto Him shall the gathering of the peoples (plural) be,” but that gathering is still future.

Observe this remarkable peculiarity in prophecy; there is no perspective in it. There was to be an interval of at least nearly two thousand years between Shiloh's coming and the gathering of the peoples to Him yet the prophet connects the one event immediately with the other, the vast interval in no way diminishing the importance and prominence of the more distant one. Thus, instead of prophecy's being like a picture with prominent foreground, diminishing “perspective” and “vanishing point,” it is like a chart, in which the object retains the same magnitude whether it be near or distant; and the reason is plain. In a picture we look along from the ground, from the point of human sight; but in a chart we are looking down, from above, and everything is comprehended at once in the view. The mind of the Most High, therefore, sees and comprehends everything in one vast and infinite plan; past, present, and future—the whole events of eternity—being within the stupendous range of that omniscient intelligence. The abrupt connection of events separated by long ages is one of the proofs that a prophecy is divine. Men do not write so, for men do not think in such a manner. They look at events from the ground line, and see but a limited range with a perspective—what is future constantly diminishing in value and prominence in proportion to its distance.

I should define prophecy as an infinite reasoning—the conclusions formed by perfect wisdom on the basis of perfect knowledge. Men can tell by their imperfect wisdom and limited knowledge that certain results will follow such and such causes. But even the wisest men are often entirely at fault. Metternich, who was one of the most astute diplomatists, said to Lord Elardinge in 1848 at Vienna, that he thought there would be “disturbances, but nothing much;” yet four days afterward he was flying for his life, and his house was sacked. If one knew everything and reasoned correctly, he could tell the whole chain of results to all eternity: of course God alone can do this, and therefore, as Newton said, “If the scripture prophecies are accomplished, the scripture must be the word of God;” and this kind of evidence to the inspiration of scripture is a continuous one, as years progress and the prophecies are fulfilled—and a cumulative one. Miracles attest a revelation at the time of its announcement; prophecies, which are miracles of knowledge, attest it for subsequent times; so that we are never without supernatural evidence of God's words. Regarding prophecy in this light, we can get some slight idea of that august and stupendous Mind which, comprehending and remembering all phenomena, reasons to their consequences through millions of ages.

Judah was to stoop and couch (the first of these original words implies a compulsory abasement, the second a voluntary humiliation). But he was to couch as a lion, ultimately to rise up in royal dignity and judgment. It is, in principle, the “sufferings of Christ and the glories that follow.". In the end of the Book, when the apostle John is called to behold the Lion of Judah who had prevailed to open and accomplish God's governmental decrees, he turned and beheld, not a lion but, a “Lamb as it had been slain “: that was how the lion had prevailed—by humiliation, suffering, and death, which He had descended into to rise again into regal dominion and power.

Not so Issachar. He was an ass couching down supinely between two burdens. (The word translated “strong” appears derisive—lit. “bony.” The usually correct Gadsby seems at fault for once in thinking that this is meant to be eulogistic of Issachar: it is certainly the reverse.) He saw that rest was good and bowed between two burdens; like those who, living by sight, seek to make this world their place of rest, but really find themselves doubly burdened—with spiritual and temporal responsibilities. The world takes it out of him too; he becomes “a servant unto tribute.” There is a difference between Buridan's ass and Issachar: the former could not make up his mind which of the two bundles of hay to eat, and so stood starving—Reuben like. The latter would have both and they were too much for him; he could not digest them. He couched in a voluntary humiliation: to him the earth becomes a Grotto del Cane; the air near the ground soporific and poisonous.

But Judah couched to rise again, his purpose indomitable whether in defeat or victory. For some reason most of those who have risen highest in human history have had lives of previous probation in extreme humiliation. David, Joseph, and Moses, minding a few sheep, censured and slandered; Julius Caesar in captivity with the pirates; the Russian Peter laboring in the Saardam and Deptford dockyards; the Prussian Frederick degraded in his childhood and youth; Luther singing for bread in the streets; King Alfred slapped in the face for burning the cake; Washington, like “Cincinnatus awful from the plow,” rising to rule armies and states; Grant from the tannery; Lincoln and Garfield from the canal boats. The gold is found down in the dirt of the earth before it is formed into a crown to encircle the king's brow; the pearl must be made by the oyster's saliva in the ooze of the sea, ere it rest on the queen's breast. There are those who ascend, but it is like going up the Tarpeian rock to come down in crushing disaster; and there are those who are trodden under foot, but like the fruitful seed to rise again, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold. If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him.

The condemnation of Simeon and Levi shows us the witness of the Holy Ghost against religious intolerance and persecution. They are confederate and deceitful, as religions bigotry always is, but every truly religions man will echo Jacob's repudiation, “O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou. united; for in their anger they slew a man they houghed oxen (lit.).” The innocent suffer with the guilty in these accursed crusades—the innocent ox with the guilty Shechem—not that Shechem was half as bad as they. The worst of this crime is, they do it in the name of God, religious order and separation; and so bring religion into the abhorrence of unthinking minds. They thus contrive to wrong the world and the church at the same time.

“Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath for it was cruel. I will divide them and scatter them.” They were thus scattered but in different ways. It is frequently said that the tribe of

Simeon were scattered as schoolmasters, but I know of no sufficient evidence for the statement, and think that there was nothing in the disposition which could qualify them for the office—except perhaps in one of its branches, the castigatory. Levi was also scattered, but the subsequent faithfulness and zeal of the tribe caused this curse to be turned into a privilege: they bore the sacred offices of the service and the priesthood.

Bigotry is not banished: it is around us—within us perhaps. The Protestant communities have indeed the comforting fiction that the Romanists have absorbed it all. It is convenient for instance to remember the burning of protestants by Mary, and to forget the hangings and embowelings of papists by Elizabeth—who made a law that, if a papist converted a protestant, both were to be put to death. No, Babylon has no monopoly of this quality, nor her “daughters” either.

Scripture Imagery: 45. Ancient Lights, Dan, Zebulon

“Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea.” That is, he traffics with the Gentile world, which in that dispensation indicated a condition of compromise of divine order. Yet strange to say when great crises came, and the people of God were in imminent danger, Zebulun was one of those who took a leading and valorous part in defense of divine principle. They struggled with Sisera's host “unto the death in the high places of the field “; they rallied round Gideon when that mighty man of valor sounded the God-inspired blast in the valley of Jezreel; and to David there gathered to battle fifty thousand of them, “expert in war,..... which could keep rank, not of a double heart.

However much we may be surprised at the inconsistency, the fact remains that there are many Christians who have far too much traffic with the world, yet who, if foundational principles be attacked, will throw off their worldly spirit and come forward vigorously, even to death straggle and martyrdom, in defense of ùthe word of God and the honor of Christ. The middle ages afford us very many examples. That rough sturdy warrior, Crillon, when hearing of the sufferings of the Lord Whom he professed to follow, could not restrain his emotion, but cried out in the church, “Où étais tu, Crillon?” His thought was that, if he had been there, he and his valiant troops would have fought to the death to deliver their Master. But in a peculiar way the present time affords us an example of this strange and—so far—gratifying sight.

For when the enemy is not a raging lion, he is a specious minister of light. “New lamps for old” is his cry, like that ancient magician who was said to have deceived the prince's servant. He has at present an attractive variety of new lamps to select from: there are sober looking ones, almost fit for a philosopher's study, of German-silver, manufactured by Strauss & Company; there are elegant, aerial “fairy lights,” French-polished and marked with such names as Renan; then there are others of transalpine and trans-atlantic design (the former stately and antique, the latter with every possible convenience of adaptability); and there are not a few of Britannia metal. All are warranted to look bright and do everything (except to continue a light when the time of darkness comes). And there is such a determined effort to get the old lamp away from us that one might suspect that the magician knew full well that, if we give it up, we shall lose with it everything worth possessing. Nay, if we will not give it up, he will refurbish and rectify the old lamp itself for us, only let him have the opportunity. Now there are many of the children of Zebulun as well as the children of Joseph and Judah who say, “No, we shall not let him. So long as, by the grace of God, we have the faculties of life and thought, we shall not let him. We shall cling to the old lamp; for, dull and battered as it looks, it throws a light over all eternity.” Many modern designs are good, but we object to a modern gospel. “This lamp, from off the everlasting throne, Mercy took down and in the night of time, Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow."

Yet there are those who are busy exchanging; who know not that, when the old lamp is given up, with it will vanish “the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, The solemn temples. . . And like the baseless fabric of a vision, Leave not a rack behind.”

Prominent among the exchangers will be always Dan, ever enterprising, erratic, and seeking a new departure. He is “religious” too, and this is what makes him dangerous— “a serpent in the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels so that his rider shall fall backward.” It was the sons of Dan who robbed that religious young man, Micah, of his idol and priest, and then set it up at Laish; thus being the first to formally institute the treasonable wickedness of idolatry.

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols,” for this sin is the specious snare that lies like a serpent— “earthly, sensual, devilish” —in the path, to bite the horse's heels, and cause the very catastrophe of apostacy. Such an innocent looking adder too, like that frozen snake which the man in Esop took home for his children to play with. The warmth restored the snake and then—! So we find that, when the tribes are recorded in Rev. 7 in the character of servants of God (ver. 3), Dan is omitted; for idolatry is the sin that broods the eggs of all other sins in its nest. It cannot be “regarded as mental error merely,” nor “the Jews regarded as an ordinary community. In a theocracy it was civil treason; and the great purpose, moreover, of the whole institution [of Judaism] was to redeem our race from the depraved and wretched condition which that sin involved."

Nevertheless such is the grace of God that in Ezekiel's prophecy of the restoration of the tribes (where it is a question not of service but of mercy) Dan is the first mentioned and provided for—the worst sinner of all (though very appropriately he is the least near to the sanctuary); then at last is fulfilled Jacob's assurance which even their wickedness could not cancel, “Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel.” We see in other ways the blending of mercy and judgment. Moses said, “Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan.” He has some of the same characteristics as Judah; and so (while we never get a leader from such a tribe as Reuben's) we find that Dan with all its faults is honored by having a deliverer called from his sons, when from that tribe strode forth the heroic and stalwart form of Samson, disastrous to the enemies of God in his life, more so in his death: a curious personification of the blended natures of a snake and a lion's whelp.

There is thus seen a steady decline from Reuben. Beginning with infirmity of purpose, it proceeds through craft and cruelty (Simeon and Levi), through worldliness and sensuality to idolatry, in Dan who is the seventh. As usual the seven is divided at the fourth stage, where God (in Judah) intervenes with the name of Shiloh. From thence the virus and the antidote work side by side, until the evil gets to its worst. This causes the prophet to ejaculate, “I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord!” When that seventh and worst stage of evil is reached, then comes God's salvation; just as, when the leper was quite covered with his disease, the priest could pronounce him clean; so when the wickedness of the race culminated in the murder of the Son of God, “The very spear that pierced His side, Drew forth the blood to save.” From that moment all is changed to blessing and victory, culminating in Benjamin, who is man's twelfth, but God's ninth—Son of my Right Hand,” though it had been said, “Son of my sorrow.”

So that in the principles relating to this plain Syrian family, and the order of their progress, we see in a microcosm the course of the history of the whole human race: as in the falling of an apple, the swinging of a chandelier, or the quivering of a frog's leg, were discovered the course of those vast sidereal laws that hold the solar systems in their courses.

Chapter 158

Scripture Imagery: 46. Gad and Asher

The word “salvation” is a spring which if touched by the feeblest finger instantly swings open the colossal gates of Paradise and lets out upon our brows, “in all triumphant splendor,” the golden flood of that holy light, the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, shining from the face of Jesus Christ. Directly Jonah said, “Salvation is of the Lord,” he is delivered from his darkness and misery. “The old, old sea, as one in tears” casts him from his “foamy lips.” Moses says, “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord,” and at once the divine command goes forth, and the affrighted multitude cross the yawning gulf in safety. Sinking Peter cries, “Lord save me! and IMMEDIATELY Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him.” The importance of this principle cannot be overrated. In Mark 10 the disciples are dismayed to find that even a rich man is not sure of entering the kingdom, and inquire in dismay, “Who then can be saved?” That last word instantly brings the response, “With God all things are possible.”

From the moment therefore that Jacob, hopeless of all else, exclaims, “I HAVE WAITED FOR THY SALVATION, O Lord,” the whole character of his dying charge changes: old things have passed away, and all things become new. No longer do we read a melancholy record of sensuality, wickedness, and judgment, but promises of beneficence, happiness, and triumph. The electric current has touched the black rough carbon and it gleams with celestial light.

It proceeds: “Gad, a troop, shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last:” that is the inevitable character of the new order of things—conflict and at first defeat, but ultimate victory. So “to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me,” says Christ, “in My throne, even as I overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne.”

But that is a strange starting for the glorious new life. If we had the arrangement of matters, we would have it settled quite differently no doubt; but perhaps it is as well that we have not (besides, do not even the kings of the earth always put their young sons into the army to “endure hardness,” discipline and conflict: And they cannot promise ultimate triumph, or should we ever hear of a Prince Imperial, death-stricken with the savage assegais?). This new life begins mostly with the cry of suffering, with pain, struggling and constriction. The bitter waters of Marah come soon after the salvation at the Red Sea bank.

We should have more care and patience towards the newly converted, if we considered how painful a time of transition the beginning of the new life is; what “troops” attack and often overcome them; what a tearing of tendrils, as old habits and associations are broken away from; what a sense of flatness and disappointment when enthusiasm cools, and persecution, contempt, and disparagement arise; what surprise to find that the ordinary calamities of life strike and hurt as much as ever; what dismay to discover that Christians have faults still, and even that from his own heart the convert hears the language of doubt and sin—like that poor pilgrim, sore beset, crossing the valley of the shadow of death. These are amongst the troops that attack the nascent life. Let us not yield to that wide-spread instinct of adding to them, to carp and snarl and think we are being “faithful “; let us protect it from needless blows, and cherish it in love and wisdom, for Moses says,

“Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad” —he has a glorious future, though a painful present. The ugly duckling may prove to be a young swan after all: meanwhile most of the fowls of the farm-yard hiss and peck a little at the new corner, awkward as he is, with a world of conceit in his head, and a bit of shell still clinging to his wing.

“But he shall overcome at the last.” In the battle of spiritual life some Blücher shall come before the night falls, and bring with him the victory that was never really doubtful, though it often seemed so.

The wilderness is not all desert; there are oases, Elims as well as Marahs: “out of Asher his bread shall be fat.” “Happiness” comes now, and fruitfulness. “Let him be acceptable to his brethren “: they no longer look askance and with suspicion on him. “Let him dip his foot in oil,” that is, walking in the grace of the Holy Spirit. “Shoes iron” —what pertains to his walk shall be in strength; “and brass,” capable of bearing judgment. “As his days so shall his strength be." We should often prefer this promise reversed so as to read, As thy strength [is little] so shall thy days be [easy]—the difficulties smoothed and accommodated to our weakness.

The unclean writer Sterne's phrase, “God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,” is generally quoted as scripture, while it is peculiarly the reverse of the spirit of scripture. God does not usually temper the wind, putting the whole world out of gear for the lamb's accommodation. He does something much more simple, natural, and wise: He strengthens the lamb to bear it. It is His way, much more natural and far better for us, that He should strengthen us to walk on a rough road, than that He should polish the surface of the wilderness smooth for our behoof. If the road is too rough, we may stumble; it might be too smooth, and then we may slip: people stumble forwards; they slip backwards.

But Asher is happy nevertheless, for happiness really is much less dependent on outward circumstances than we are apt to think. It “does not consist in strength, or Myro and Ofellius would have been happy; nor in riches, or Croesus would have been so.....” Why should Socrates go to Philip, when he had all he wanted at Athens, “four measures of wheat flour for an obolos, and abundance of good spring water for nothing”? Why, indeed! All Diogenes wanted from Alexander was for him to get out of his sunshine; and Diogenes content with his kennel and crust was a happier man than Alexander weeping for other worlds to conquer. Then observe how happiness is ever connected with fruitfulness; “Let Asher be blessed with children.” Whatever person or community is fruitful in gospel work is sure to be characterized by a rejoicing spirit: the words “rejoice” and “fellowship in the gospel” characterize the epistle to the Philippians, and the Philippian spirit everywhere.

“He shall yield royal dainties” too—not only taste them but supply others with them. The chief thing that makes the queen-bee so much larger and more regal than the others is the different food supplied to it in its early life. The egg and young larva are just the same as the others; it is the fact of its being nourished on “royal dainties” that causes its royal development in body and mind. So those who nourish their spirits with royal dainties become royal-spirited.

Chapter 159

Scripture Imagery: 47. The Hind Let Loose

The third stage of the new course is Naphtali, who “is a hind.” Here the idea of conflict continues” My wrestling,” —and weakness; it is a hind, not a hart. The hind however expresses cleanliness (Deut. xii. 15); devotion (Psa. 42:1); activity (Isa. 35:6); grace (Sol. 2:9); swiftness (2 Sam. 2:18); exaltation and security (Hat. iii. 19); tender love (Prov. 5:19); especially of the young (Job 39:1). The twenty-second Psalm is called Aijeleth Shahar, the Hind of the Day-break; and many of these qualities are found expressed in it.

“Naphtali is a hind let loose, he giveth goodly words.” The chief thoughts are Liberty, Ministry, and—in Deut. 33—Satisfaction. It is not merely a free hind, but a freed hind; one that had been kept in bondage, but now is “let loose,” with all that delightful sense of liberty which only the once-imprisoned can feel, who are not so likely voluntarily to enter some fresh bondage as those who have never been galled by its chain: though in truth the hind is not very intelligent in such matters, and never can be quite depended upon. That is to say, that persons who have passed through the bitter experience of Rom. 7, who have turned in despair to all religious expedients to relieve their troubled consciences in vain, and at last have cried, “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” —that such persons have a much keener appreciation of the “liberty with which Christ hath made us free,” a much higher estimate of the value of the gospel in its enfranchising power than others who have not passed through such experiences, though there is that general tendency in all to become “entangled again within the yoke of bondage,” which we see rebuked so sternly in the Epistle to the Galatians.

There is a lower grade, too, of those who are willing to surrender their consciences to the keeping of others because of the ease which it affords them (for liberty increases responsibility); or even for the more sordid price of temporal benefits, like the dog in Aesop that boasted of the fine fare and easy times he had, till the wolf asked him what that thing round his neck meant; and on learning that the collar was his badge of servitude, the wolf continued that he preferred scarcity and freedom (it might have been a conversation between Naphtali and Issachar). “Beware of dogs” and the canine spirit, which returns to what it has rejected, and submits to a human chain.

And this “glorious liberty of the children of God” may be, and often has been, the portion of those who are galled with outward chains, slavery and imprisonment. There were many Christian slaves who were Christ's freedmen. Peter sleeps calmly “between two soldiers, bound with two chains.” Paul and Silas sing hymns of praise with their feet in the stocks, in that “inner prison.” In Rutherford's “sea-beat prison,” his Lord and he “kept tryst.” The Countess de Roeulx wondered how de Bray could sleep or eat with such fetters as she saw upon him: but he said, “These shackles are more honorable to me than golden rings and chains And as I hear them clank, methinks I hear the music of sweet voices and the tinkling of lutes.". When they led him and la Grange out to execution, his companion said, “We are here for preaching the word of God:” whereat the hangman pushed him off the ladder, and as the rope tightened round his neck his enfranchised soul sprang into a liberty as boundless as the universe. “His lifeless body lay, A worn

out fetter which the soul Had broken and thrown away.” Though its body be caged yet the voice of “the lark at heaven's gate sings.” Zenobia's golden chains meant slavery: de Bray's clanking irons meant freedom.

When this condition is reached, and these qualities (indicated in the first paragraph) attained, there is a natural development of ministry, “he giveth goodly words.” This ministry may not be public nor official, yet it is true Ministry none the less. It is a less to us that we are so accustomed to associate the thought of ministry with an official position, or a distinctive dress—something formal and authoritative. The New Testament applies the word in a very comprehensive way, and sometimes applies the word—διακονος—to a woman. A course of this sort, simple and sincere service to the people of God as opportunity offers, is a course above all others to lead to Satisfaction, though not unmixed with griefs. “He that watereth shall be watered also himself.” “Of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the Lord.”

And this, though there can hardly be anything in the universe more difficult to satisfy than the human heart; for in it live the horseleech's two daughters, incessantly crying, Give, give. It is more insatiable than the grave: the maw of the sea and the yawning earthquake are less greedy. Apicius killed himself because he had only eighty thousand pounds left; Ahab had all Israel, but sickened for Naboth's vineyard; a “little corporal,” having all the best parts of Europe, must also try and rob the Muscovite of his frozen plains; “a little stooping man,” having conquered the whole world, sits down and weeps for another to conquer. “To be equal with God” would not satisfy the Antichrist: he will exalt himself “above all that is called God.” Though “Ambition hath one heel nailed in hell, She doth stretch her fingers to touch the heavens.”

That πλαρωμα or “Fullness,” which the ancient sages ever sought but never found, has been discovered by the fishermen of Galilee—the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, those two who “jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field,” of old against the enemies of God—whence arose the great Light that illumines those that sit in darkness and the shadow of death. They have revealed to us “the fullness of Him that filleth all in all “; and “of His fullness have all we received.”

God, thine everlasting portion,

Feeds thee with the mighty's meat;

Price of Egypt's hard extortion,

Egypt's food, no more to eat.

Art thou weaned from Egypt's pleasures?

God in secret thee shall keep,

There unfold His hidden treasures,

There His love's exhaustless deep.

Chapter 160

Scripture Imagery: 48. Fruitful Bough, the Shepherd, the Stone

The new life is further developed in Joseph, in whom it arrives at full spiritual manhood—he is the eighth from, Judah. He possesses some qualities that have little or no place in the struggling and rejoicing activities of Gad, Asher, and Naphtali—not so much the activities of spiritual life as its passivity, showing that what we are is of more importance even than what we do. For a great part of his life he could do apparently nothing: he was shut up and could not come forth, baud in fetters, the iron entering into his soul; but he had that noblest of qualities, fortitude; “his bow abode in strength.”

This is the last and highest development in human beings of spiritual life. “Joseph is a fruitful bough,” which receives every rough blow without resentment, yielding up in return its own rich fruit— “that noble tree that is wounded itself when it giveth the balm;” that divine passivity of fruitfulness, which, when nailed to a cross, showers down from its dead branches pardon and beneficence on the murderers. “The archers have sorely grieved him [it is not the passivity; of callousness]; and shot at and hated him, but his bow abode” [he did not use it against them; he kept it for their enemies]. And it “abode in strength “: it is the self-restraint of power; not the supineness of weakness. Here is a remarkable verse in Colossians: “Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power unto.” Unto what, now, would the mind expect this grand cumulative energy to lead? “Unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness.” The balance-wheel of a watch seems to be doing all the work, but the spring, hidden away and apparently unmoving, does more. Incessant motion may be, like the shaking palsy, a sign of weakness, not of strength. There is a calmness like that of a star, apparently lonely and motionless in the darkness, but when viewed by more than mortal sight, it is seen to be filled with a teeming and fruitful energy, traveling in the exact course its Creator appoints, and irradiating the darkness of Cimmerian night to myriads of unthankful eyes.

“A fruitful bough by a well:” hidden sources of nourishment as of energy—the water of life springing from the wounded ground. Though he may be imprisoned, he is like a noble tree in a gaol-yard: for him, “Stone walls do not a prison make, Nor iron bars a cage.” “His branches run over the wall.” When Pellico was at Bran, and sinking into torpid misery, through the protracted sufferings of his imprisonment, he was comforted and strengthened by Count Oroboni, a fellow-prisoner of singular beauty and nobility of character. This man, suffering all that a refined mind in loathsome surroundings can, combined with prolonged illness from accident and disease, retained a lofty serenity of confidence in God and good will to man. “Too kind for bitter words to grieve, Too firm for clamor to dismay,” “Oroboni was indefatigable in turning my attention to the motives which man has to show kindness to his enemies,” says Pellico.” “Many men had injured him, yet he forgave all, and had the magnanimity to relate some laudable trait or other belonging to each, and seemed to do it with pleasure his noble virtue delighted me. Struggling as well as I could to reach him, I at least trod in the same track, and I was then enabled to pray with sincerity; to forgive, to hate no one, and dissipate every remaining doubt and gloom.”

The cactus is a churl: he wounds every one who touches him. The nettle is a meaner though softer nature: those that touch him gently he stings; grasp him strongly, and he is soft as velvet. The thistle is determined and “high-spirited “; he reverses that: touch him gently and he is harmless; but let those that roughly handle him beware—Nemo me impune lacesset! Far above all these, living “in those bright realms of air,” where “The chestnuts spread their palms, Like holy men at prayer,” is the “Fruitful Bough,” extending to all his gracious beneficence. The insects shall burrow in it; the woodpeckers pierce it; the sparrow find there “an house and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young “; the grass shall be sheltered by its shadow, and the air scented and tinted by its odor and bloom: to those who treat it kindly, yielding ever fragrance and fruit in its season; and to those who assail it with rough blows, maintaining a god-like dignity of patience, showering down upon their heads its opulent benediction. For as high as the heaven is above the earth; so great is a lofty spirit above a “high spirit “; so much higher is dignity than pride.

Therefore the blessing on Joseph is of a nature spiritual and hidden, having the character of eternity and infinitude. “The Almighty shall bless thee with the precious things of heaven, the dew and the deep that coucheth beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb.....unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills” These descended on the head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of him that was, separate from his brethren. He had suffered a doable rejection—from the world and from his brethren—and the benison is thus doubly emphasized.

“From thence [i.e. from the Mighty God of Jacob] is The Shepherd, The Stone of Israel.” It is very appropriate that the promise of the Messiah in His patient and passive character should be thus connected with Joseph; it is the more striking as the connection is only moral, not by lineage as in the case of Judah and Shiloh. The mind naturally passes from thinking of Joseph in these aspects to the patient and suffering Redeemer Whom he typified. Whatever there was in Joseph of tender love, of watchful care, of painful self-sacrifice and vicarious suffering, is a fleeting shadow to us of the Great Shepherd of Israel. Whatever there was of solid and abiding passivity, of weight and strength, of constancy and consistency that, formed in fire and flood, can endure through fire and flood, is an adumbration of that Stone— “tried” and “precious “which the builders rejected, but which the Almighty has made the head of the corner. “And He shall bring forth the Headstone with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace, unto it!”

Chapter 161

Scripture Imagery: 49. Benjamin's Portion

Jacob's prophecy closes with the ultimate triumph of the divine life in Benjamin, and the judgment of its adversaries; for though Joseph may take personal wrong patiently, God cannot allow it to end there. He must, as the Supreme Ruler, intervene with a Judge and Avenger; in which sense Benjamin, “Son of my right-hand,” is a type of Christ, Who is ordained to judge the quick (“in the morning,"—the ushering of the millennial day) and the dead ("at night,” or at its close). As in Joseph, the eighth from Judah, we have the highest development of the divine nature in man; so in regard to Benjamin, the ninth, we have disclosed to us the highest revelation of the divine nature in God. Nine is the number of Deity—the triune God—the square of heavenly number 3. Multiply 4, the earthly number, by 9 and we have 36, the number of books in the Old Testament where God is administering on earth: it ends in judgment, its last word being “curse.” Then multiply 3 by 9 = 27, the number of the books of the New Testament, in which God is administering a heavenly dispensation (the church), and revealing His own nature, the character not being judgment and curse, but grace and blessing. Now in connection with Benjamin we have first the side of judgment in Genesis, for “God is light “: and then, in Deuteronomy we find the latter aspect, for “God is love.”

Hiero of Syracuse asked Simonides, “What is God?” The philosopher requested a day to consider his answer, at the end of which he asked for two days more; then for a week: finally he replied that the more he considered the subject, the more dark and unfathomable it seemed. Now, strange to say, we can see the divine nature far better in connection with a worthless creature like Benjamin than with a Joseph; just as one can see the sun better through a smoked glass than through a crystal. For when we hear “God is love,” it is no description unless we know what love really is, and how wholly it is self-sustaining, and independent of the elements of admiration or approval, or of any qualities in its object that would awaken these elements; how it is also independent of its object's gratitude, or reciprocated affection. Dwelling in the ecstasy of its own bliss, pouring forth its flood of opulent light and warmth upon that object, it irradiates it with its own splendor, as the sun's light makes a vulgar soap-bubble iridescent with beauty and glory.

The difference between admiration and love is like that between lightning and light. Lightning selects its objects, preferring bright and substantial ones; but light, while shedding its benign beams on all, appears in its greatest beauty on objects that are out of its direct range. It is beautiful all along that hemisphere which it directly illumines, but having reached the limits of the horizon, it makes the atmosphere bend its rays round, so as to touch the hidden regions beyond, and there—though it is not stronger—it appears at its greatest beauty, to “Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign dye, Kissing with golden face the meadows green, Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy,” in the east; or purpling the evening sky with its gorgeous tapestry in the west. “Its holy flame forever burneth, From heaven it came, to heaven returneth.” “As strong as death: many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.”

For who would expect this? “Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in, safety by him.: and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders! “

Observe the eccentricity of love; that is its character. It moves in a peculiar orbit, amenable to no formula of line and compass, though some day, when our vision is enlarged, we may find that there are reasons for its eccentric course; as Adams and Leverrier discovered, by reasoning almost superhuman, the cause, hidden hitherto in the deepest recesses of the heavens, for the variations in the planet Uranus' course. Meanwhile we can only wonder at that love which thus selects and glorifies with its beams as worthless and troublesome a tribe as can be found. Benjamin was the spoiled child, l'enfant gate and l'enfant terrible of the family, continually a cause, whether by fault or misfortune, of distress and disaster to the rest, from the time when, in giving him birth, the poor mother dies, to the fearful calamities brought on all Israel. A modern traveler—singles out its present representatives as being specially repugnant in habit and appearance amongst the many unattractive tribes in Palestine.

“Brother, no eye of man not perfected, Nor fully ripened in the flame of love, May fathom this decree.” “Celestial love in itself. . . With such effulgence blazeth, as sends forth All beauteous things eternal." It throws its own “halo o'er the loved one's head” for reasons that neither mathematician nor metaphysician can trace; nor will it pause to explain its course. Enough for us that the warmth and light of its benign beams rest upon us, and are shed abroad in our hearts. We are the objects of this divine love; and there is much blessing and power in contemplating how independent is its nature; for we are prone to think that modesty would exclaim, “Who am I that God should love me?” Consider that this ineffable grace rests upon us by reason of its own spontaneous action, like the light of heaven, without needing anything to draw it forth. She, to whom the question was contemptuously put, “And do you really think that the Almighty chose you before you were born?” replied, “Yes, I know it; for I am sure He never would have chosen me since.” No, nor before either, but that God is Love.

Chapter 162

Scripture Imagery: 50. Exodus, Jochebed and Miriam

The section comprising Genesis to Deuteronomy forms one book of five volumes—called popularly The Pentateuch, but called in scripture The Torah (Law)—being divided into the five parts, each having its peculiar character, like the Psalms and other portions of the scriptures. Besides this, however, Genesis forms a kind of overture to the whole Bible, where in a vague, inchoate, dream-like way all the themes which are detailed in the following oratorio—the great oratorio of the Messiah—are found suggesting themselves, conflicting, mingling, dying away and rising again, wailing in adversity, and triumphing in victory. Then comes the next movement, the book of Exodus, having one distinct theme—redemption.

The colossal and majestic figure of Moses towers far above all the world's sages and leaders so unquestionably—whether from a spiritual or secular point of view, for every nation in all ages since has been enormously affected by his actions—that it is strange to look at the humble home and surroundings of his origin: a poor persecuted slave woman, doubtless with agonizing tears and prayers, trying to hide her child from the wolfish pursuers; her poor little girl watching and plotting for the safety of a crying babe. In such a way is the personality of Moses shaped and disclosed. As one might look upon his huge and sublime statue by Michael Angelo, and find it difficult to realize so great and god-like a figure being fashioned by such a common-looking uncomely old man; so it is difficult to realize so mighty and stupendous a nature shaped by persons and things thus humble and mean. They were however, but chisels of the divine Sculptor, and little knew what vast eternal work they were doing.

But how little any of us know what we may be doing when we are fulfilling the humblest duty that lies nearest to hand! Poor Jochebed thought she was only making a rush basket, when she was in reality making an ark that would save one nation, and carry an argosy of blessing to all others: little Miriam thought she was only “minding the baby,” when she was watching over the destinies of the world.

And little Miriam's stratagem: was it not delicious? Hasn't it made ninety generations of people smile at its acuteness, and rejoice at its success? Let us learn that we do not badly but well when we put thought, care, and strategy (so that it be honest strategy), into the work of God. “I became as a Jew to the Jew,” a Gentile to the Gentile; “being crafty I caught you with guile “: so says one of the most honorable men that ever lived.

“And the woman took the child and nursed it.” She had faith in God and courage, and the child, “when he was come to years” chose the same path of faith, “esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt;” “refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.” Who can tell us how much a man's character is formed by the mother (with perchance something derived too from that little elder sister that minds the baby like Miriam, watching over it with a patient love that is one of the most beautiful and pathetic things upon earth)? It is significant that the Holy Ghost has written so frequently thus: “Hezekiah...his mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.” “Manasseh his

mother's name was Hephzibah; and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord" This is always the most important part of "woman's rights," and "woman's work "; nor could the selfishness of man ever deprive her of it, even in the darkest ages—the right of suffering, and the work of laboring, for the future race—the sacred privilege of giving the earliest and most effective tendency to the character of the sons of men. "Thou barest me not for thyself," said Iphigenia to Clytemnestra, "but for all the Greeks." That, too, is not the least painful of her rights, that when the object of her care and training is come to years and beginning to show some result of her labor and anxiety, she must deliver him up, leaving him to take his choice between Pharaoh's daughter and the reproach of Christ. In either case she loses him, and knows that for him it is the beginning of sorrows. "So short a time," says Thetis looking mournfully upon her son Achilles, "the light of heaven to view; So short a time, and filled with sorrow too!" In Aristophanes the magistrate wants to know what women have to do with war; "they contribute nothing." "Indeed!" replies Lysistrata. "Do we not contribute our sons?" Plato was a very wise man; but his proposal of having a public nursery, and for the mothers not to be allowed to know which were their own children would hardly—humanly speaking—produce men like Moses.

Naturally, then "it came to pass that when Moses was grown, he went out unto HIS BRETHREN and looked on their BURDENS." What a revelation in two words! He, the exalted courtier, identifies himself with the herd of crouching slaves, and "is not ashamed to call them brethren "; he looks not on their sins (though we know that, as with all enslaved races, oppression had generated amongst them all the foulest and meanest vices), but on their burdens, the grinding affliction and misery of their daily lives. As he looked, his heart swelled until it became the heart of a redeemer and his nature grew till "Deep on his front engraven Deliberation sat, and public care; And princely counsel....Sage he stood; With Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear The weight of mightiest monarchies." Ah, what a different world, and what a different church, it would be, if we looked more on one another's burdens, and less on one another's faults!

But all this was of God's designing and producing, preparing a redeemer for His poor sinful and afflicted people, who seem (except a few like Amram and Jochebed) entirely to have forgotten His existence. And "'all these things happened to them for ensamples... for our admonition." Moses is the Savior, persecuted even in infancy; rejected at His first advent by the people for whom He had surrendered all, but received at His second advent—after an absence amongst the Gentiles where He had received the Bride—ultimately delivering His enslaved brethren from the thraldom of the spiritual Egypt, and the dominion of the usurping king, from the judgments of divine justice, as of human injustice; leading, defending, suffering, interceding for them; giving up every comfort, pleasure and ambition of life for them; and receiving in return the murmurings and suspicions of their ungrateful and rebellious natures—yet never forsaking them until the harassing dangers of the desolate wilderness are past, and they see on "The low dark verge of life, The twilight of eternal day" dawning upon the summits of "that goodly mountain and Lebanon."

Chapter 163

Scripture Imagery: 51. Moses and Elijah, the Three Plenipotentiaries

There are three ambassadors from God, bearing different messages to the world, who stand out from all else, like the pole-star and the “pointers” of Ursa Major in the northern skies. As the pole-star looks down on the earth with unsleeping care day and night, so Christ, the greatest of these ambassadors, remains ever the central pivot, round which the creation progresses, and in which it centers. And as the two “pointers” circle round that central star from eternity to eternity, nearer to one another than to it, as though placed at a reverential distance from it, yet always in a direct line pointing to it, the well-known and unfailing guides of way-worn travelers and storm-tossed mariners, so the other two ambassadors, Moses and Elias, always, whether consciously or unconsciously, visibly or invisibly, stand out as burning and shining lights circling round and pointing to Christ, the pole-star and pivot of the vast realm of all the gleaming constellations of God's desires and decrees.

Though such immeasurable distance separates the two subordinate ambassadors from their chief, yet there is much in common to the three. Each is tested by the forty days' fasting, and attested by miraculous works. Characteristically, the miracles of Moses (the dispensation of law) are nearly all works of judgment and punishment. The miracles of Elijah (the prophet) of a mingled character—he calls down fire, but rain also. The miracles of Christ are (as becomes the gospel) entirely of a healing, beneficent, saving nature. These three ambassadors met eventually, on the holy mountain, in the hour that joined and separated two eternities, as the Isthmus of Panama connects and severs the two oceans; and they spoke together of that which they had in their different spheres of testimony always spoken of—whether by word or action—the event to which all the eternal histories converge and focus— “His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.” When that final combined testimony is effected, the mysterious cloud envelopes them and removes the ambassadors of law and prophecy, leaving only Him of the gospel, whilst the Voice from the excellent glory pronounces, “This is My beloved Son, Hear HIM.”

There was especially one feature in common in the lives of these three ambassadors. It was—contrary to what might be expected—outward defeat. We are apt to think that the great benefactors of the earth live in a continual whirl of victory. Certain the truth is that the greatest of them have lived in a vortex of disasters. They may go from strength to strength, but outwardly it seems to be from weakness to weakness. And this reveals the quality of their natures. For it is not difficult to be virtuous and venturesome when every effort is crowned with success. It is infinitely nobler to adhere to a right purpose when every effort is mocked with failure. It is perhaps the noblest of all qualities in a created being to cling to a right cause when providential circumstances are perpetually adverse. To Christ by every outward test God Himself seemed so; as in that hour when the Voice of agony cried in the darkness, “My God! why hast THOU forsaken Me?” Yet He who thus suffered from God and man knew that what He was accomplishing was according to the will of God, and endured to the end.

It was this quality—God-given—in Moses that makes him so pre-eminently a type of Christ, and fitly one of the three great plenipotentiaries. In very many ways he was typical, but in this above all, that his life and work was a prolonged series of defeats and retreats, and without one tangible result of benefit at its close. Yet for all this he adheres to the revealed will of God to the disastrous end, and achieves vastly more than any other human being that ever lived.

But consider this element of undaunted devotion to a right course through defeat: how infinitely it is above that useful but common-place virtue of doing right in the expectation that virtue will always be rewarded and vice punished. Seneca's pilot has far higher thoughts than that when in the tempest he cries to the God of the seas, “You may save me if You will; you may sink me if You will; but what ever happens I shall keep my rudder true!” The truth is that there is no possibility of our seeing the highest moral qualities—nor perhaps of their existing at all in a created being—apart from defeat. The noble nature will survive and qualify defeat, and often by “heavenly alchemy” transmute it into victory. Caesar falls on the shore while landing: the soldiers are dismayed at the ill-omen; but he grasps the ground with his hands, saying, “Thus I take possession of thee, Africa!” Thus also he of Normandy, falling down at Bulverbythe, said, “I have taken seizin of this land with both mine hands.” There have been some very great men who have done strange things with defeats. The august Washington constructed a new continent with them; and the illustrious William the Silent, into whose labors Washington entered, not only hardly ever ever gained a battle, but lost continually under all kinds of untoward, unexpected, disastrous circumstances, yet to no one man, since Luther, does the world owe more for deliverance from religious and political tyranny. This quality seemed to characterize this man's family too: his kinsman, “Admiral Coligni, said, ‘I have lost four battles; yet I show to the enemy a more formidable front than ever.' The blood of Coligni ran in the veins of William (III. of England), and with the blood had descended the unconquerable spirit which could derive from failure as much glory as happier commanders owed to suecess."

The ancient Scandinavians said that Thor smote the sleeping earth-demon, Skrymir, three colossal blows with his hammer on the face; but Skrymir merely woke up and brushed his cheek, saying that a leaf must have fallen. Thor seemed to have quite failed, and left the Utgard much discouraged. But afterward he found that the three blows had dented three great valleys into the earth. Time often reveals that what had been derided as a falling leaf was really a giant's blow.

But for the present there is but apparent failure; and we do well to avoid the vulgar error of judging of causes by their outward success, or being influenced by the desire of popularity or the fear of defeat. “'Tie not in mortals to command success, But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it." Outwardly the life of Moses was one long retreat from foe and assault from friend; and when at last he stands, after a century of hard endurance, labor, strife, and self-sacrifice, with undimmed view and undaunted heart, within sight of the goal, “Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears, And slits the thin-spun life.” Alas, for hope, “if thou wert all, And naught beyond, O earth!”

Chapter 164

Scripture Imagery: 52. The Burning Bush, Zipporah

Moses, seeing his brethren oppressed, intervenes to save them from their enemies with temporary effect; but when he further tries to save them from themselves, they scornfully reject him. Consequently he retires into Midian amongst the Gentiles, There he finds others suffering injustice and oppression, and defends them: undaunted by the previous discouragements. Opening to them the resources of the well, he wooer and wins Zipporah; after which he returns afresh to redeem Israel: this time he is received and submitted to. All this is obviously typical of the rejection of the Messiah by the Jews, and His consequent work since amongst the Gentiles, where He receives the church as His bride, and assumes relationships and responsibilities in respect of her family and her children (the Gentile remnant of Rev. 7), returning afterward with her to save His Jewish people.

Zipporah typifies the bride in the adversity of the wilderness—the church militant; as Asenath, Joseph's wife, typifies the church triumphant in the future glory. Asenath is a kind of additional luster to her husband; but Zipporah is much the reverse—a hindrance and a discredit to him, a source of danger and sorrow; besides which she is murmuring and ungrateful, continually misunderstanding him—took him at first to be an Egyptian! When we hear of a king Cophetua wedding a beggar maid, or a Duke Chandos rescuing the wife of a groom from his blows and subsequently marrying her, and other instances of that kind of event embodied in the myth of Cinderella, we first think of the romantic side of the transaction, and admire the chivalrous devotion that has been shown; but reflection compels us to admit that the inconveniences of such mésalliances are enormous and continuous. Though love smiles at them, prudence recognizes them: they are not to be ignored. But there is nothing that a just and wise man like Moses could do under the circumstances, except maintain patience and silence. He should have foreseen, and did foresee, all that at the beginning; it was part of the sacrifice he had to make. Then there is this to be said in regard to Zipporah—that when she met the Hebrew ruler, his glories were obscured; he was a homeless outcast; and it was then she received him in love and faith. We may be sure he never forgot this. Now all that is manifestly typical of the church. Zipporah means “little bird;” whether by design or not, the name suggests the same blending of contrary thoughts—pathetic suggestions of weakness and waywardness; yet also of a nature belonging to the heavenly places; and of affection and divine care.

For the purpose of redemption God reveals Himself from Horeb. Consider the position from which He speaks: a judge's attitude and words would be wholly different, when sitting on some committee to relieve the poor, from that which it would be when sitting on the bench to declare the law or punish criminals. Sinai is the throne of judgment: Horeb is the throne of grace. They are distinct mountain summits in the same range: Horeb (Ras Safsefah) being much lower and more accessible than Sinai (Mousa) the rugged and imposing mountain of the law. This is now pretty well established; but it is strange how general has been the tendency to regard them as the same place; just as men usually confuse law and grace. It is at Horeb alone the bush can be burnt without being consumed; there is to be held the great assembly of the redeemed, the Bride,

Gentile, and Israel, being grouped round the Redeemer. Hither also came Elijah when he wanted to surrender his charge; and here he found that God was not to be found in fire, tempest, or earthquake, but in the still small voice. The voice on Sinai was very different.

The Seer looks on all things with eyes that pierce through the mere outward shell, and discern the vital and spiritual meaning; not like the “dumb driven cattle,” who “have eyes and see not,” except what lies on the surface. This principle affects all sides of life. When the lady said to Turner that she could see no colors similar to his in nature, the great painter replied, “Don't you wish, madam, that you could?” He could see them—could see all the gorgeous hues of the sunset in a bit of wet stone. Bruce could see how to win a battle, and Solomon how to live in king's palaces, by looking at a spider; as another learned how to build a bridge over the Tweed by looking at a spider's web. Young Watt's aunt could see nothing but steam coming out of the kettle that she chid him for watching so continually; but he could see how to develop a more stupendous power from thence, than that monstrous genie whom the fabled fisherman let out of the little box, and who grew till he rose athwart the whole sky.

As a philosophic Kirchoff can by the lines in the spectrum tell us what the sun's flame is composed of—by holding a piece of triangular glass to a ray of light coming through a hole in a shutter, discern what are the materials that form the distant worlds; so Gideon looking upon a bit of wet fleece, or Moses viewing a burning bush can tell us the nature of those spiritual worlds which no telescope has power to reach—can tell us the very thoughts that live and shine from the heart of their Creator.

Chapter 165

Scripture Imagery: 53. The Rod-Serpent, the Leporous Hand

THE ROD-SERPENT. THE LEPROUS HAND.

Here is another great principle in a small subject, “The Lord said, What is that in thine hand? And [Moses] said, A rod.” Jehovah then empowers him to perform prodigious wonders with his rod—to create and destroy life, to blacken the heavens, to break the vast power of Egypt, to divide the sea—eventually in the deliverance of Israel. (Of course the Talmudists, with that airy inventiveness so characteristic, which spurns such vulgar aids as facts and proof, say that this was the rod which Adam had in paradise, which descended to Seth, Jacob, and so forth. But that is just the common tendency to transfer the virtue to the instrument in order to take the glory of it away from God.) The reader may rest assured that the rod was in itself nothing but a piece of common dead wood; and the principle is this: That while men are apt to think, How much would I do if I had only such and such instruments, God is saving, “What is that in thine hand? Do it with that.” “With that! why 'tis only a bit of stick. Ah, if it were a scepter—or even a crosier; but it is only a crook.” Yet knowest thou not, O man, that thou canst do greater wonders with that bit of common stick, if God send thee, than thou couldest otherwise with scepter or crosier, though it were the scepter of Charlemagne, or the crosier of Gregory?

For Moses shall break the iron scepter of Thothmes with a stick; Shamgar shall slay the Philistines with an ox-goad; Joel shall destroy great Sisera with a bit of iron; Judith slay Holifernes, or Ehud smite Eglon, with a bit of steel; David and the woman of Thebez shall deliver Israel with a stone; Gideon rout the Midianites with a few candles and pitchers; Samson overthrow Israel's enemies with a bone. There is not such glory in doing great things with great means: there is in doing great things with small means. If Columbus had gone exploring in the Alert or Challenge, 'twer no wonder that he found a new world; but he went trusting in God, and did it with three open boats and a few mutinous men.

But the whole passage here is very comprehensive and important. Moses says that the people will not believe him; therefore Jehovah gives him two signs to prove the truth of his mission: and these signs are, in one form or another, the outward evidences that should accompany any one at any time who claims to speak for God to men—

FIRST CREDENTIAL.—The rod is always the emblem of authority, whether it be the king's scepter, the bishop's crosier, the field marshal's staff, the musician's baton, the magician's wand, or the shepherd's crook: and the authority of man—that talisman by which he has power and rule over other creatures—it is his intellect. Sir J. Herschel draws an extraordinary picture of what man's condition would be without this faculty; having no natural means of defense (much less of offense), helpless, driven before the elements, and devoured by beasts. Now what has taken place is, that this faculty of man, having fallen to the ground, has become “earthly, sensual, and devilish” —a serpent of a fearful and deadly power in the earth, though not without its own kind of attraction (there is a sort of beauty in that into which Moses' road is changed); and occasionally innocent too: many serpents are not poisonous. That this degradation and perversion of the

human intellect has taken place, let all history attest. The most frightful evils to man and beast in the world have ever been caused by human skill in devising oppression and torture. As if the ordinary ills of life were not sufficient, the fallen intellect invents such playthings as the rack, Baiser de la Vierge, and a thousand other forms of hideous cruelty.

Therefore the first sign is that a man shall, in obedience to and faith in God's word, stretch out his hand and reclaim this rod; and when thus retaken it is changed from something malign and dangerous into an instrument of valuable service. The intellect of man is raised from its prone condition; and is no longer earthly, sensual, and devilish, but informed by that wisdom from above—consecrated to the service of God and the welfare of men. What miracle could be greater than change of a Saul into a Paul, or to turn the intelligence of a John Newton from managing a slave-ship to composing, “How sweet the name of Jesus sounds?”

SECOND CREDENTIAL.—Then the hand withdrawn from the bosom is leprous— “Out of the heart are the issues of life “: not out of the head; nor merely by outward contact. That is to say, The evil uncleanliness of a man's outward actions (hand) originates in the “heart,” or that side of the mind which includes the Will and the Affections—the emotional side, as contrasted with the intellectual side. Hence “the fool says in his heart, There is no God:” for there is no fool great enough to say it in his head—i.e., by intellectual process. The Indian Chief Teedyascung was never trained in metaphysics; but he rapidly came to follow this “trail,” when the pale-face missionary told him that the Great Spirit required His servants to forgive their enemies. “That cannot be,” said the warrior, looking out at the long row of scalps that hung at the door of his wigwam. “That is so,” said the missionary, “And His own Son, dying on the cross, prayed that His murderers might be forgiven. To which the Chief rejoined, “Before that could be, a man must have a new heart.” Which statement contains a fund of sound theology. Now Moses is commanded to put his hand again into his bosom; but when it is drawn forth, it is found to be cured and cleansed. God has dealt with the hidden fountain of life and now the outward actions of life are sound and pure.

The first sign deals with what is popularly called the “head,” the second with the “heart “; and these accompany every divine message, and constitute out-ward proofs of its origin. In the opening nine chapters of his Evidences of Christianity, Paley works out with overwhelming power that witness which is given by the changed lives of (especially the earliest) Christians; how those who had previously lived selfish lives contaminated with all the foulness of the classic idolatry, now voluntarily passed their days in “labors, dangers, and sufferings,” solely because of the divine message which they had received. Paul catalogs a list of the vilest criminals conceivable to the Greek Christians, and adds, “Such were some of you; but ye are washed.....your body is [a] temple of the Holy Ghost.....Glorify God in your body.” How shocked. Augustine is in his Confessions with his old life at Carthage; how distressed is Bunyan in his Grace Abounding with his old sins; and how great a testimony to Carthage and to Bedford there was, when the grace of God transformed those powerful intellects, and fervent spirits, into agents of His own service for the welfare of His people!

This kind of evidence is continuous and omnipresent; therefore God says, “If they will not believe these two signs, neither hearken to thy voice, thou shalt take of the water of the river and pour it upon dry land, and the water shall become blood.” That which is the appointed means of life and

purity—the water—becomes to the rejector the appalling symbol of death and judgment. “There remaineth but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.”

Chapter 166

Scripture Imagery: 54. Moses Losing Caste

It would naturally seem that the best way for Moses to help the oppressed Israelites would be for him to retain his high position in Pharaoh's council. Being an adopted son of Princess Thermuthis, he might reasonably have thought, “I can do them most good here as a patron and friend at court: if I identify myself with them in their sins and miseries, I can do nothing.” There would be in most princes a natural reluctance to be associated with the herd of slaves who were so bitterly hated and despised by the Egyptians whom their toils enriched. Radbod drew back when Bishop Wolfran was just going to baptize him, saying, “I would sooner be with my ancestors in Woden's Hall, than in heaven itself with your starveling band of Christians.” And there would be much inducement to even more benevolent men than he to prefer remaining in a secure and dignified position, where they could do good to the “lower classes” without any serious loss to their own pockets or reputations.

But Moses was to take a different course; like those Moravian preachers who went in amongst the lepers, and bade farewell to all the world beside. No earnest mind has approval for the Sybarite of Herodotus, who could not rest when a crumpled rose leaf was on his couch, and who fainted on seeing a man working hard. But many earnest minds have admiration for Simon Stylites receiving the homage of the people as he stood year after year on his uncomfortable pillar above them. It were better that he should come down and “walk the radiant path that Howard trod to heaven,” by plunging into the squalor and infection of prisons and charnel houses, that he might rescue those that were bound in affliction and iron. To be sure this way has its disadvantages: Howard dies of the fever; the Jesuit priests, who nursed the cholera-stricken in Paris, were buried with their patients; Father Damon has just written from the leper settlement in the Sandwich Islands, to say that at last the disease has seized upon himself. Yes, it certainly has its disadvantages. If one be afraid of losing caste, he had better not rashly adopt it.

He Whose course was thus foreshadowed and after-shadowed, being in the form of God, became a little lower than the angels; and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself unto death, even the death of the cross. He made Himself of no reputation. So completely does He identify Himself with fallen, guilty, unclean men, that He says to Jehovah, “My goodness extendeth not to Thee"; and, being blameless and holy, He confesses our foolishnesses and sins as His own. He is not ashamed to call us brethren!

Moses therefore voluntarily takes his place amongst the outcasts. He finds them broken by internal contentions; and so suffocated by oppression that they are more ready to settle down in their afflictions than to welcome his aid. There is a process called scientifically “alternate generation “: the insect aphid gives life to a larva which remains a worm, but gives birth to a new aphid, which in its turn originates a new worm. And this is the course of sin and misery; sin produces misery and misery produces further sin. The one is a cause and also an effect of the other, like famine and pestilence; together they conspire to degrade Israel, and sink them to a depth from which it seemed impossible to raise them. “What can you do with such dogs?” said the

explorers of the Africans. “What is the use of preaching to such dogs?” echoed the colonist to the preacher. (The preacher was old Dr. Moffat; and so he gave out his text, “Yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.") Well, no doubt these “dogs” are bad enough, but the oppressor's testimony against his victim cannot be implicitly relied on: men generally slander those whom they wrong. The wolf in the fable made a very plausible statement against the lamb and his family; but it was an ex parte statement after all, and would hardly do to go before a jury without some judicial comment.

Moses demands their release from Pharaoh, who treats him with scornful brutality. But what would you? Consider what unbounded impudence it must have seemed to Pharaoh for these firebrands to come agitating amongst his slaves, upsetting the whole fabric of society! Truly the evangelist must not be too sensitive to rebuffs: he needs toujours l'audace to bind the strong man and spoil his goods; he will find a grim earnestness in those other little French sayings, that one cannot make a revolution with rose water, nor make an omelet without breaking eggs. And there is a still greater trial that will meet him. To Moses it must have been the keenest sorrow of all when he found that the result of his sacrifices and labors is but to intensify the already bitter misery of their lives. For the usual course of things when people seek to keep others in oppression takes place now. Their slave-drivers say they are listening to these agitators because they are idle, and so their work must be increased; they must make bricks without straw. Pharaoh regards Moses and Aaron as the sole cause of these disturbances in his Arcadia. (Ex. 5:4, 9), and roughly drives them from his presence. On their way thence they are met by the elders of the wretched Israelites, who solemnly denounce them with bitter upbraidings for being the cause of their fresh miseries.

All this is very natural and very typical: the Hebrew proverb says, “When the tale of bricks is doubled, Moses comes.” But the case usually is, that the deliverer's approach causes the work and suffering to be increased. The Hindu saying is more appropriate; that when a person is threatened by a serpent, he is awakened by a lizard crawling over him. For we usually find that the awakening of those, who are sunk in a lethargy of temporal or spiritual oppression to a sense of their condition, is in all ways a repugnant process. It is when the drowning man is being resuscitated that he suffers most severely; it is a necessary suffering if he is to be saved; but it is painful for the rescuer to contemplate.

The emancipator brings war; the evangelist brings trouble: the first signs of the new life are often cries of pain. “These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also,” said the Thessalonians, “and Jason has received them!” The first coming of the Prince of Peace brought a sword, world-wide contention, the destruction of Jerusalem with a million lives. And yet it is not the deliverer that is responsible for this, nor does anyone grieve over it so bitterly as he. “Moses said, Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that Thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh, he hath done evil to this people: neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all.” In that crisis of insult and disaster he utters no word of retaliation to the attack of the elders, nor of complaint as to the treatment which he has received, either from king or serf; no complaint, even like that of Elijah's, that his work was in vain (much less any complaint in that wretched spirit of Jonah, who would sooner see a city destroyed than he should suffer in professional reputation). In the nadir of his course he thinks of their sufferings; not of his own. There is no higher expression of magnanimous sympathy than this; except in that sacred life of One, Who, though He knows that to His people “Death is the crown of life “appointed by God” to free the oppressed and crush the

oppressor," yet weeps at the grave of Lazarus; Who in all our afflictions is afflicted, though well-knowing that each pain is but the birth-pang of some future happiness; Who, in the hours of His passion and death, wept for the guilty Jerusalem, whilst telling her daughters to weep not for Him but for themselves.

Chapter 167

Scripture Imagery: 55. Pharaoh Negotiates

When the adversary finds that he cannot destroy the people of God with the fury of a Nero, he tries, with far more success, the caresses of a Constantine. The erstwhile roaring lion assumes the role of a minister of light: Pharaoh, finding violence of no effect with the Israelites, tries diplomacy. Herodot as says that the ancient Egyptians used to capture crocodiles by putting clay into their eyes: the simplicity and the effectiveness of this method are very ingenious. It is the way in which the king of Egypt now endeavors to deal with the Hebrew Ruler. To be sure there is the initial difficulty that the crocodile may object to the proposed treatment, as Moses did in the manner we shall now consider—

Pharaoh's first attempt at throwing the clay was rather coarse and crude: he said, “Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." This is the low unworthy suggestion which is usually made to blind every awakened soul. “If you are determined to be religions, well, be it so; but don't cut yourself off from the rest of the race. Here are plenty of places of worship, objects of worship, and methods of worship, to suit every possible, and impossible, disposition. Choose one of them and do not, with more than pharisaic self-sufficiency, separate from them all and condemn them all.” Pharaoh does not now seek to hinder them from worshipping their own God as long as He is placed on a level with Amun-Ra, Thoth, and Osiris; and once thus placed on a level with the Sun, the Intellect, and the Hidden Life, His glory is sure presently to be reduced to the level of Anubis, Pasht, or Scarabcens the Jackal, Cat and Beetle; or Seb the Earth-goose, or even Seth—the Devil. If however one will only be content with a God, for instance, a little more to be reverenced than the sacred beetle, and a little less than the holy bull, why then there are all the appliances of worship that Egypt can afford at his disposal.

And such appliances! Where else could such grandeur and solemnity in religion be found? It is adorned all the way down from the Second Cataract to the Delta with the most magnificent temples the world has ever seen. The Karnak was approached by an avenue nearly two miles long of vast granite sphinxes, the temple itself huge enough to hold thirty modern churches, its central hall large enough to contain a couple of modern cathedrals. Where has there ever been a more imposing and gorgeous ceremonial; a more venerable and learned priesthood; a more majestic ritual? Apparently Egypt was the place of all others to be religious in, especially now when it she wed itself so tolerant (or latitudinarian?) as to admit a new deity.

But toleration springs from principle; latitudinarianism from policy: and there is as much difference between them as between zeal and bigotry. Bigotry will inflict suffering for a Cause; zeal will endure it. “The bigot's mind is like the pupil of the eye; the more light you pour on it the more it contracts:” but the zealous mind is like a flower, which the light expands and colors. The tolerant man is often zealous; while the latitudinarian is often bigoted. In Christendom latitudinarianism ends, as its name ends, in Arianism.

The test of Pharaoh's first proposal is constantly arising in a large and historic sense. The first disciples of Christ had to turn their backs on the glorious temple of Solomon when the spiritual

Egypt had captured it and made it a place of idols. God was no longer to be found there when His Son had been dishonored: they elected to worship in the caves and dens of the earth; “Heaven, Lord, is there where'er Thou art.” Later on there came a time when the spiritual Egypt proposed to the people of God that they should mingle their worship with the revived Babylonish idolatry; but there were found not a few who had the fidelity to prefer the bleak mountain sides and caverns of Scotland, or the Vaudois valleys to the magnificence of a St. Peter's Cathedral; as those who preceded them had preferred the catacombs to Jerusalem's temple, or the “waste howling wilderness” to the Karnak of Thebes. The same principle and choice arise in the history of every converted soul: which will you have, a sensuous religion without God, or God without sensuous religion? You cannot have both, though Pharaoh proposes that you should—but that is only his clay; coarse and crude it is too—simple mud.

His second attempt is much more adroit; the clay of better quality, more plastic and adhesive. He says, “I will let you go.....only ye shall not go very far away.” Now that seems a fair enough proposal. Why should one travel farther than is needful? and who is to determine the precise distance? All distance is relative. Reasoning thus the soul will find itself settled in a new Haran, on a kind of border land of spiritual life, a land of earthly worship and fleshly associations; a land of doubt and danger. it is a poor condition when a man shall say, “How near can I live to the world without being involved in its judgments?” “Is it wrong to do this?” “It cannot be much harm to do that.” When he says—not “May I,” but “Must I do such a thing for the Lord?” it is a poor condition and a dangerous position: like walking on the edge of a precipice to see how near you can go without falling in. An eccentric man engaging a coachman asked some of the candidates how near they could drive to the edge of an adjacent cliff. Some of them said they could go within the breadth of a threepenny bit. At last came one who said he would go as far away from it as ever he could: this one was instantly engaged.

To these two Machiavellian propositions the Seer, “firm to resolve, stubborn to endure,” makes answer with that calm dignity which gives far more evidence of an inflexible purpose than all the tempestuous wrath which has been shown against him. “We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as He shall command us." That is the shortest distance that must separate Israel from Egypt: three days—death and resurrection. “Three days' journey” carried them to the other side of the Red Sea—that Red Sea where God's righteousness is vindicated; where Justice strikes and Mercy saves. It is the type of the Cross, where in an infinitely larger sense judgment was executed and salvation was accomplished; and which ends for the disciple the course of Egypt, and begins that of the wilderness. In that Cross the world is crucified to him and he to it.

Chapter 168

Scripture Imagery: 56. Diplomacy Exhausted

Pharaoh's third proposal was that the adult Israelites might go from Egypt, but they must leave their children behind them. The wolves in Aesop made a some what similar overture to the sheep; namely, that the latter should exchange their lambs for the young of the wolves. What a friendly proposition that seems at first view (yet on reflection misgivings arise). Pharaoh however only suggests that the Hebrews shall leave their own little ones in his care: has he not already given some evidence of his strong interest in them?

By such an arrangement that astute diplomatist knew full well that he would have them all back in his power sooner or later. If the Hebrews had gone without their children their hearts would have remained in Egypt, while their bodies were in the wilderness: a truly miserable condition and an insult to God; for their bodies are no use to Him without their hearts—dumb, driven cattle were better than that. God's purpose is to bring them entirely out of Egypt, and to fix all the objects of their interest and affections outside its borders, through the wilderness on Canaan— “to deliver us from the present evil world,” and to set our “affection on things above.” Pharaoh's purpose is to fix the objects of their love and interest in the old kingdom of sin and condemnation, and so keep them tethered to it as securely as if bound by chains. For the force of attraction is very marvelous: we see for instance, an immense body like the moon held swaying round the earth by a chain so slight as to be absolutely invisible—else would she instantly bound away into the recesses of the heavens, but her heart is thus linked by earthly ties. In this, too, as in her celestial origin and borrowed light is she not fitly a type of the church?

By-ends' great-grandfather was a waterman, said the Dreamer; he rowed in one direction whilst he looked in another. This was the position proposed by the third compromise; only that Pharaoh wanted the Hebrew boat tautly moored to the Egyptian shore: then they might row as hard as they liked in the other direction. It is the general principle that we have here of the displacement of the center of attraction—the attachment of the interests and sympathies of God's people to worldly allurements of any sort. But still it is remarkable how often the Devil hinders the advance, and thwarts the usefulness of even the most devout and earnest by the special means before us, namely, their children. If he can only get possession of them as hostages, we have some terrible examples of how he will use his power: Jacob wailing over Simeon and Levi, as David over Absalom; Aaron's ministry silenced by the sight of his sons struck dead before the altar. The spiritual Pharaoh also got possession of Eli's sons, and so, though an aged and devoted servant of God, he has to bear the rebukes of a child; to have the ministry of his life turned into a reproach; to close it in a storm of disaster, and to remain a perpetual example of the evil effects of a man's neglecting his own home. It is quite safe to censure him, for he cannot defend himself: his eyes, dimmed in ninety-eight years of service to God, darkened entirely, and his white hairs bowed in death when he heard that His Ark had been captured by the enemy—perhaps his censors might not have taken such a thing so much to heart. Nevertheless we must learn—a hard lesson—that the ardent prosecution of the highest duties will not exempt us from the evil results of neglecting the lowest. The glory of the illustrious John Howard's achievements is dimmed by the death of his

own son from insanity through wickedness.

When a third compromise is rejected, Pharaoh, exhausting the resources of diplomacy, makes his last proposal: he will let them go when, how, and whither they like, but they must leave their flocks and herds. Now this proposal appears innocent enough; it seems a mere matter of their surrendering a little property; but Moses' answer reveals the subtle deadly nature of the overture—like that spear of Ithuriel, the touch of which disclosed the lurking fiend. For the prophet's answers not only disclose his own mind, but also his questioner's. A remarkable mode of answering exercised by his Antitype in later times; for our Lord usually not only replied to the words of those who questioned Him, but also to their very thoughts, which fact reveals largely the meanings of His utterances. Moses answers, “Our cattle also shall go with us, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God: there shall not an hoof be left behind." He regarded the cattle, and so did Pharaoh, not merely as so much property, or food supply (for they ate manna in the wilderness), but as the sacrificial means of approach to Jehovah. In fact they were so many types of CHRIST. The enemy wants us to go into the wilderness without Christ: it would be miserable indeed; but it would mean certain destruction.

It is peculiarly the proffer of the present time. The coarser and cruder attempts of the enemy against the people of God have more or less failed, and he is now ready to surrender everything if he can but deprive us of the sacrificial Christ. He will let us have the Christ of the manna; but not the Christ of the passover. That is to say, there is a fashion of religion rapidly growing that affects to receive and reverence our Lord in His heavenly life here on earth, but it rejects and treats with slight and repugnance the doctrine of his sacrificial death, His vicarious suffering and atoning blood. Now there are some stern and terrible words in the New Testament on this subject. In that chapter, in which we have the Son of God set before us as the Anti-type of the manna, we are told, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.” That is, except you receive into the soul and appropriate, as food is received and appropriated by the body, the Son of Man in His blood-shedding and death, ye have no spiritual life at all. It is stated here in contrast with the manna which was the wilderness food of the redeemed—the earthly life of Christ; and the connection is that unless the Israelites had eaten the passover sacrifice before starting, they would never have lived to get to the wilderness at all. This passage has no connection with the Lord's Supper, except that in the symbolism of the Lord's Supper we profess all this. Nor is it a continuous matter like the manna; the tense is, “except ye shall have eaten (φ■γητε,π■ητε” that is, once for all appropriated) the death and atonement of the Son of Man.

However greatly the religion of emasculated sentimentality may extend, the truth shall remain, that before mercy can be satisfied justice must be appeased; before the gospel can be preached, the law must be vindicated. Before the Savior can accomplish His first miracle in turning water into wine, the Law-giver must accomplish his first miracle and turn water into blood.

Chapter 169

Scripture Imagery: 57. The Destroying Angel, the Blood, the Hyssop

Those mysterious sphinxes, like Silent Destinies, with that passionless and inscrutable gaze that seems to reveal nothing but comprehend all things, have looked down on many strange events in the thousands of years daring which their calm, imperturbable faces have watched over Egypt; but on nothing more wonderful and dreadful than the tornado of judgments which swept down on that doomed country when Jehovah, with mighty hand and stretched out arm, enfranchised His people and crushed their oppressors.

Pharaoh had hardened himself, before God—by means of His forbearance—had hardened him still further, till there is now no chance of bending him he must be broken. The reed advised the oak to bow to the coming storm; but the oak haughtily scorned the advice: so the mighty wind flouted it, broke it, blasted it, tore it up by the roots and tossed, it aside in its anger, whilst it passed over the weak bending reed unharmingly.

There went forth the fiat, “Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment!” Each blow insults and abases some amongst them. Serapis blushes till his Nile waters, erst so translucent, turn to a blood red: Ra, the sun-god, is compelled to smile on Israel and frown on Mizraim. The sacred frog and fly become objects of loathing. The bull-god, Apis, cannot protect. himself nor his fellow-cattle from the murrain. Seb, the earth, is covered with vermin. Osiris and Isis are extinguished in the sky; and Netpe, the vault of heaven, is covered with a shameful darkness as with a garment of mourning. The whole obscene brood are “hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky, In hideous ruin and combustion down To bottomless perdition.”

The priests had taught the people to look for another god yet to come for though, as the ancient Greek said, It was easier to find a god than a man in Egypt, yet to every human heart there was one still wanting. Had we as many as the Hindus yet there is One more—the Unknown God, as the Athenians called Him—that some principle in the heart mutely calls for. What Balder was to the Norseman, Hapi was to the Egyptians Him they ever looked for (as a possibility) in the firstborn in each family. Now as a last judgment of culminating horror the hand of the Lord is stretched out against Hapi, against the delusion of an earthly Messiah from a fleshly and evil source. Egypt had oppressed Jehovah's first-born: Egypt's first-born is slain: “Balder the beautiful is dead.” The expectation of Hapi is cut off forever!

From this hurricane of devouring punishments sweeping through the land, what is to protect Israel? Not their strength or intelligence, for they are enfeebled and abased; nor their innocence, for they are sinners like their neighbors. God must undertake it; He must not only deliver them from their enemies but deliver them from Himself. “A god all mercy is a god unjust,” and in some way His justice has to be satisfied if He intervenes to rescue them. Therefore it is we now come to that means of deliverance, and lo! here is a strange thing. The angel of destruction is approaching—to whose descending blows of Almighty power all that was fabled of Odin, and of giant Thor's crashing hammer, or Jötuns casting avalanches in the Asgard, or Gigantes throwing rocks and mountains at Olympus, is as the tales of children playing; and the agent appointed to

protect them from this awful Omnipotence is—a lamb!

The important type of the paschal lamb is happily so well known that I will only say here: Its distinctly typical meaning as denoting the atoning and vicarious death of our blessed Redeemer permeates the New Testament, and is definitively affirmed in John 1:29, 1 Peter 1:18, &c. It must be a dead lamb; the death of Christ alone atones. It must become so by a non-natural death as evidenced by the blood-shedding; that is, something penal and repellent—for sin is the cause of it. (Those whose false delicacy is shocked when we speak of the blood are not shocked at the sin that causes its flow—that is merely “moral obliquity “: but if we deny the substitutional death of the Lamb of God, we must tear such passages as this out of the Bible and then we only have a mutilated fragment of it left.) The Israelites take shelter under the blood and eat of the victim inside the house, identifying themselves with, appropriating and assimilating, the Substitute. It is roast with fire; subjected to God's judgment. To be eaten with bitter herbs (the repentance of a contrite heart) and unleavened bread (“of sincerity and truth,” 1 Cor. 5:7, 8). It was to be no ordinary feast: they were to eat of it standing—with solemn reverence: with loins girt—the girdle of truth E ph. vi.: with shoes— “shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace “: a staff—the word of God—in their hands: in haste—a matter of urgency; the whole attitude betokening a journey away from Egypt—no thought of receiving Christ and remaining in the world. It commenced a new era and closed the old one; Nisan, the seventh month of the old year, becomes Abib the first of the new.

The lamb was taken on the 10th of Abib, the day when our Lord entered Jerusalem on the ass' colt and was slain on the 14th, the day He died. It was slain “between the two evenings” (Ex. 12:6, marg.): the Jewish day would commence at sundown on the Thursday evening, at which time the Lord and His disciples took the passover, but the bulk of the people evidently took it before sundown on the Friday evening. The Lamb of God having been slain on the Friday “between the two evenings.”

The blood was to be sprinkled with hyssop, “From the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall:” it was like that sprig of Plantagenet bush that the earl of Anjou wore on his pilgrimage to Palestine; it was a symbol of humility. We may well doubt the reality of that conversion which asserts itself by a levity of flippant self-sufficiency and dogmatism: that is more likely to be real which shows itself in self-judgment, in a contrite heart and a lowly mind. “I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes,” said Job. “Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips,” said Isaiah. “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord”! said Peter. The agonies of self-judgment and abasement which such men as Augustine, Luther, Cowper, and Bunyan (especially the last) endured for a time almost unsettled their reason, and dissolved their frames. Indeed this ordeal is meant to cause a practical dissolution of a nature that all things may become new. The autumn leaves that strew the ground must be withered and decomposed ere they can come up as flowers again: the black coal must be broken and dissolved in the retorts before it is spiritualized into that ethereal vapor that gives us so bright as light: the dirty rags are thrown into the vats, humbled, torn to pieces, turned into a very pulp, and then presently we see them rolled off in the new form on the “calendars” white, pure paper, on which may be inscribed the maxims of sages, seers. martyrs; yea, even the words of the living God Himself.

It is for this reason no doubt that the record of the exodus is here interrupted by chap. xiii. in which the command is given to associate man with the ass in redemption, ver. 12, 13; a principle most

humbling and instructive. (The proud flesh that is shocked by the thought of blood, and speaks of “the dignity of humanity” will resent this humiliation; but I think I would rather be classed by God with the asses than by man with the apes.) After all the ass, though ceremoniously unclean, is no unworthy emblem of patient humility which has been crowned with supernal honor. Does it not carry a cross like the humble and wholesome plants of the cruciferae? And was it not bestrode on that eternally memorable 10th Abib by One Who in lowly pomp rode forth to die, what time “The angel armies in the sky, Looked down with sad and wondering eyes To see the approaching sacrifice.”

Chapter 170

Scripture Imagery: 58. Miriam's Choir, Red Sea, Salvation

Salvation is a great, comprehensive word. In one sense the Christian has now salvation—“receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls, “ that is, from the divine judgment against sin, which corresponds to the passover in Egypt, and the deliverance at the Red Sea. In another sense it is still future, “ready to be revealed in the last time,” though now “nearer than when we [first] believed." In a third sense it is a daily experience, “Work out your own salvation.” The Red Sea marks an important stage. Israel had been sheltered from the Destroying Angel by taking refuge under the blood of the paschal lamb; but at Pi-hahiroth they seem to be in a more terrible position than ever, the mountains on each side, the sea in front, and a rapidly approaching army of overwhelming power behind. They cry out in a panic of fear, whilst their leader's stern and reticent face holds converse with the skies. Then he turns to them and says, “Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.”

This is the state in which those are who have been converted and have accepted the sacrificial Savior, but have not yet seen the great and glorious consequences of His death and resurrection. The soul then sees itself beset by every evil power and sinister principle of the world, the flesh, and the devil— “the devil is most busy on the last day of his term,” says old Fuller—and sees no way of escape, apparently nothing but disaster. Thus the poor pilgrim who had set out from the City of Destruction fell into the Slough of Despond before he reached the wicket-gate and the path of life (but if he had taken heed to the steps—the promises—says the Dreamer, he would not have fallen into such extreme misery). Thus Paul cried, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?” Thus Luther groaned and cried at Erfurt, and threw his inkstand at the devil at Wartburg. (I think, though, that he did the devil more harm with ink than with inkstands). Thus White-field fell morbid and despairing at Oxford. Bunyan's fears were so great that he thought that his breastbone would split. Cowper took a coach to drown himself. Yet undoubtedly it was because these men had divine life and faith that they were so afflicted. What is wanted is for such to STAND STILL, AND SEE THE SALVATION OF THE LORD; to see (not the forgiveness of sins, that is the passover, but) the judgment of sin (the root principle, which is not forgiven but condemned, Rom. 8:3), and the great and permanent deliverance ensuing thereon.

When Bilbao planted his flag in the sea to assert his authority, or the Venetian Doge cast his ring into it, or Canute scolded it for approaching his chair, or Xerxes flogged it for wrecking his ships, I am not aware that much impression was produced on it. “Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain, Man marks the earth with ruin—his control Stops with the shore.” But when the Hebrew seer lifted up his shepherd's rod over it, the great angry desolate sea recoiled in affright from his feet, making a path through its depths, and then returned with its frightful flood of roaring waters to overwhelm their pursuers. Thus Israel sees the salvation of the Lord, which, as by the one dreadful judgment of the cross, delivers and separates forever His people from Egypt and its power. “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ," not alone because God had forgiven them (that was proclaimed five chapters previously in Rom. 3:25, &c.), but because, 8:3, He, “sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

For the Christian it is done with, and can never come up again for judgment: he is to reckon himself dead, and Bye accordingly in righteousness. If he fail, he is dealt with on a new ground; not punished as a criminal by the judge, but chastened as a child by the Father.

THEN burst forth from the myriads of throats of the whole assembled nation that great anthem of sevenfold hallelujahs which billowed up from earth to sky and surged in through the portals of pearl, over the sapphire floor. Its echoes have come down to our ears through the clamors of thirty-three centuries, and even. now stir our blood like the sound of Gabriel's trumpet: “He hath triumphed gloriously..... He is become my salvation He is my God. I will prepare Him an habitation Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy!.....Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders! Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed Lord, the people pass over which Thou hast purchased..... Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea!”

And Miriam—poor little Miriam that was, that used to stand in the Nile mud watching over her little brother—she it is who is leading the choir of those millions enfranchised souls, and doubtless doing this as well as she then did that. Glorious work, Miriam! Better than minding the baby? “Glorious? yes! Better? no! Had I not watched there, I had not worshipped here.” And Moses, the babe whom her childish hands had protected, where is he? Ah! he is a brother born for adversity, and is never prominent in days of triumph like this. Presently there will be trouble again, and then we shall see him coming forward to pray, plan, labor, suffer, conquer for them; anon when the crisis is over, to again quietly obliterate himself. And this always, till he bring them right home to the promised land: then, having overcome every obstacle, he calmly closes his eyes in death and rests.

Chapter 171

Scripture Imagery: 59. Mountain, Palace, Sanctuary, the Tree

MOUNTAIN: PALACE: SANCTUARY: TREE.

Directly Israel reaches the wilderness, they naturally meet with a group of important and beautiful types of the Messiah, and even in their song at the Red Sea there is a triple presentation of Him as the goal toward which the redeemed travel: (1) “the mountain of thine inheritance, (2) the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, (3) the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established.”

Stasicrates proposed that he should shape Mount Athos into a vast statue of Alexander. This, he said, would be a monument worthy of such a king” with a river running to the sea in its right hand and a city of ten thousand inhabitants in its left.” But the idea—which is probably the most stupendous that history records—was anticipated by this first type, which was after wards developed by Daniel, and was, very likely, taken by Stasicrates from him; for Josephus says that when Alexander and his party came to Syria, Jaddua met them and read to them parts of Daniel's prophecy.

That prophet says that the Stone which falls on the image becomes a great mountain. Therefore all the features which we have seen in the type of the stone and rock become projected and magnified in the mountain. Besides which there are the obvious characteristics of Security and Dignity. Gianavello and seven men defended themselves successfully in mountain passes against four-hundred troopers, and with seventeen against a thousand. “As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, [Zion and Acra on the south and west, Moriah and Bezetha on the east and north], so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth and forever.” “They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion which cannot be moved.” Resting broad-based upon the earth, rising into the sky crowned with celestial light: though clouds may for a time hide from as those soft and verdant vales that nestle in its bosom, we know they are there still. Lightning and flood beat against it in vain. “He is our everlasting strength.” “Trembling, I survey the mountain head of eternity; dazzling summit! from whose height my dimly-perceiving spirit floats into the everlasting!”

Further (2), this is God's dwelling place. Monarchs select the most beautiful and glorious abodes in their realms for themselves: so the King of kings has selected from the whole universe the person of the Messiah. Shall a Hadrian have so magnificent a villa, or a Nero build for himself an Auren Dornus, and shall the Ruler of the Solar systems not have one too? yes, verily a true Golden House, a palace of delights.—(3), Here also is the Sanctuary, that is, a place of meeting for God and the worshipper. “And HE shall be for a sanctuary.”

Yet, strange to say, when the redeemed people go forward, they are allowed to suffer for want of so cheap and vulgar a thing as water; and straightway their songs of triumphant worship are changed to murmurs of discontent. It would be difficult to believe it, unless we look within ourselves and see also the same gross inconsistency, the same swift forgetfulness and heartless ingratitude; we who have trusted God for our everlasting destinies will often fail to trust Him for

to-morrow's bread. But it is easier for us to be astonished at their failures than to avoid imitating them. After all, this test to which Jehovah in perfect wisdom submitted them— “to prove what was in their hearts” —was more severe than many of us have been put to, or can understand. Gadsby, who passed through this wilderness, says, it is a “burning sandy sea...it was dreadful. The stirrups were so hot that I could not bear my feet to touch them, as they burnt through my slippers. Being parched with thirst, I took up my water bottle, but found the sun had cracked it and let all the water out. You cannot walk to burn your feet on the sand. You can hardly ride, for to do so is to add the heat of the camel to that of the air You cannot rest under your tent, for that is to add suffocation to heat. The eyes grow inflamed, the tongue and lips swell...the brain seems on fire...and all this from the want of a little water!”

And when at last they arrived at Marah, the water was too brackish to drink: this was a terrible disappointment. “Then God showed them a tree which when [Moses] had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet.” Once more the outward form changes—a mountain, a palace, a sanctuary, now a tree—yet it is the same Christ, but now slain, for the tree must be cut down and cast in. We must all travel by the way of Marah some time. Well it is if we can so connect with those bitter waters of suffering the remembrance of that patient and blameless Sufferer, Who has consecrated affliction and shown us how to bear it. If suffering brings to us a nearer revelation of the Man of Sorrows Who was cut down in death for us, “then pain Were sweet, and life or death were gain.”

Near every poisonous plant there grows the antidote. On the edge of the grave we may pluck the amaranth; and hard by Marah's bitter waters is hidden that noble Tree which when wounded yields its healing balm, and when stricken showers down its golden fruit; sheltering the wandering birds and scenting the air, as it lifts towards heaven its pyramid of foliage in God-like magnanimity, yet withal powerful enough to stretch out its great arms and grapple with the hurricane. It is cut off from the earth and cast into the bitter waters; it must be steeped in that which we shudder to taste, and must take its customary noble revenge by imparting its own sweetness to the waters. Lord, help us, and lead us in all our afflictions to this thrice-blessed Tree: how blindly do we grope about for everything but that!

Chapter 172

Scripture Imagery: 60. The Flesh-Pots of Egypt, Palms and Well-Springs

At Elim there is an oasis in the desert, representing the divinely appointed provision of ministry by earthly instruments. There are twelve well-springs (not “wells,” b'ehr, but ngahyin, that is, Christ being the hidden well, there are channels or ducts from Him—as apostles, prophets, teachers, and so forth). Twelve; the earthly number, four, multiplied by the heavenly number, three, for it is spiritual ministration dispensed on earth; twelve tribes, twelve gates to the New Jerusalem, twelve apostles through whom the Holy Ghost, the living water, is given; but the palm-trees represent a more general ministry. “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree," a beautiful simile, expressing not only the elegance and grace that caused the name of the palm (Tamar) to be given to the Jewish maidens; not only that hardy vitality which can live where almost everything else dies; not only that its fruits are sweet and nourishing, its ever-green bough a world-wide symbol of victory and praise, its bark yielding medicine for the sick, or made into mats for the devout, its mass of perennial foliage making “the scorching sun-light dim, That drinks its greenness from the ground,” or indicating to the weary traveler afar off across the desert, where the hidden springs are to be found—that in fact there are three hundred and sixty different uses made of it, alive and dead, by the Arabs—expressing not only all this, but above all, that participation in the sufferings and glories of the Messiah which caused its branches to be strewn prostrate before Him as He approached Jerusalem to die, and its boughs to be waved in joyous triumph at His ultimate exaltation in the feast of tabernacles.

This is a divine definition of a righteous man or woman. It is a pity that our conceptions are often so different—of something hard, rigid and ungenial. We have all met with these beautiful and bountiful natures, whose fruit is never more sweet to our taste than when we have just passed by the bitter waters of Marah. We rest ender the shadow of their gracious benediction, and for the moment cease to swell the chorus of those who are always crying that Christians are the worst people in the world.

Two such natures, lately transplanted, have shown how difficult it is to destroy the usefulness of a palm tree—one was she who was deaf, dumb, blind and otherwise infirm, yet who surrounded herself with an atmosphere of fragrant spiritual life, and earned by her own labors enough to give help to others who were in need; a second was he who went to and fro at Molokai, laboring with his remaining faculties, as one by one they were palsied, and his limbs rotted off, with leprosy. A Latin proverb: conveys the general belief that a palm tree grows best when it is burdened by weights—like the similar belief that a walnut tree thrives most on being beaten. Perhaps it is true, and that that is why the All-wise Husbandman lays burdens, and heavy ones sometimes, on the righteous—such as the weight of these three million people on the heart of Moses, and certainly he grew stronger by it. Mohammed says, “The Christians say, ‘We are the children of God and His beloved.' Answer, ‘Why therefore doth He punish you for your sins?’” Well, in the first place, God does not punish us at all; the Father chastens us (two as different matters as for a judge to be

dealing with a criminal in the dock and for the same man in his private and domestic capacity to be dealing with his own child at home for disobedience). And, secondly, the Christian is chastened because he is “His beloved,” just as the tree might be either weighted, beaten or pruned, because the Husbandman cares for it. The number of palm trees is larger and more elaborate than the number of wells. It is five (man's number) doubled.——ten, human responsibility, i. e., to God and man—the law has two tables: this is multiplied by seven, the heavenly and earthly numbers combined (three and four)=—seventy. Twelve represents a mission amongst the community: seventy represents the community itself. Moses appoints twelve pioneers and seventy elders, as Christ twelve apostles and seventy messengers. Twelve is an official number—twelve gates to the New Jerusalem, &c.: seventy is non-official.

They journey again and the whole congregation murmurs. Moses was beginning to feel the weight of them now. Usually we are apt to think that the qualities which a leader most needs are the strong, vigorous, dominant ones. But, when Pitt was asked his opinion, he replied that the quality which a prime minister most needed is patience. Pliny said the same things about a judge; and, though Moses had more patience than anyone living, it was exhausted at last at Meribah. “Would to God,” say these emancipated slaves, “that we had died by the hand of the Lord [how pious we can make our blasphemies sound by a few interjections of sacred names] in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots [I doubt whether they sat much] and when we did eat bread to the full, &c., &c., we remember the fish the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic!” Ah, “those good old times” that never really existed: what a glamor is over them—once we are well out of them. What an enchantment distance lends to the view, whether prospective or retrospective. How impressed we should be with a sense of the former highly respectable connections of these people, but that we happen to know that all they had to do with the leeks, the onions and the garlic was to grow them for their taskmasters; and that all they had to do with the flesh-pots was to clean them.

Chapter 173

Scripture Imagery: 61. The Manna, the Quails, the Sabbath

THE QUAILS. THE MANNA. THE SABBATH.

The learned critic, searching the Pentateuch for flaws with his microscopic mind—much as a midge might study a mountain—is as grateful for the quails as the Israelites themselves were. Ex. 16 and Num. 11 record the giving of quails in different ways: in Numbers a heavy punishment falls on the people whilst they eat them; in Exodus there is nothing said of this, besides other differences. That is enough for the learned critic: the quails are no longer a preliminary dish of mere game; they become evermore a piece de resistance and are served up with every kind of variety, rechauffee again and again. In his calmly dogmatic way the L. C. announces that the whole Bible is now finally proved—by means of the quails—to be a mere human composition. Numbers and Exodus differ, because Exodus is “Elohistic” and the other “Jehovistic.” (These are his two cabalistic words, the open sesame to the esoteric recesses of the dark unwholesome caves of his philosophy.) It is true that Ex. 16 has more “Jehovah's” in it than Num. 11, but that is of no consequence to the learned critic: he has said it, and that settles it—Exodus is Elohistic and Numbers Jehovistic.

If the L. C. will examine a bank-note with the same sharp scrutiny, he will find some “flaws” in that (e.g. the tail of the letter f, in the last “of” but one, is forked—a most defective letter—and generally on the edge of one of the vowels of the word indicating the note's valve there is a white speck, and so forth). But he will be a poor man if he rejects as spurious all the notes thus “flawed,” because these are the very signs which at once convince the man of business that the note is genuine: these “flaws” are secret signs, designedly placed there, and the note would be worthless without them. In like manner the L. C.'s “flaws” in the Scripture, when examined, are found to be striking evidences of its divine inspiration and accuracy. “The accounts are not identical.” Why, if they were, we should not need more than one of them: it is because they are different and relate to two different events that we have two of them. The events, too, are more than a year apart as Num. 9:1, &c., proves. In the first case God did not punish the Israelites when giving the quails, because they were as yet being dealt with entirely on the ground of grace; whereas between that and the second case they had voluntarily put themselves under the law and its penalties, and were dealt with entirely on a new ground. Besides, a special decree of forbearance is naturally shown by the Lord to His people in their transitional stage which could not be allowed later on, just as a mother has a special patience with her child when it is being weaned which she could not exercise toward it a year later. But we will leave the quails with the learned critic. To him they are congenial diet: we have something better.

In both accounts, they are contrasted with the manna, which is food supplied from heaven, with no carnal or mortal element in it. It is a type of Christ, as the divine Man come down to the earth, as we have Him presented in the Gospels. “That glorious form, that light insufferable, And that far-beaming blaze of majesty, Wherewith He wont at heaven's high council-table To sit the midst of trinal unity He laid aside." It is a strange mystery. The people say one to another Man-hu?

“What is it?” And the question remained to designate it, for no one ever found out really what it was—nor ever will. But something we know: it is the sustenance and strength of the redeemed soul. It is the Son of God come down in humiliation; it comes from heaven and rests on the earth, but separated from the defiling ground by the dew (Num. 11:9)=sanctified by the Spirit and the word. It is “small “=despised, contemned, neglected; but “round” (spherical), it retains its heavenly and perfect character. It is “white “=pure, holy; and it is “sweet.”

What that means no mortal tongue can tell. It tasted like honey, but no one ever yet defined what that is like. From despised things We often get the most valued, the gold from the dust, the pearl from the oyster-shell; from the common coal tar come the most exquisite scents, the beautiful aniline dyes, and, above all, the saccharin, three hundred times sweeter than sugar. We can neither understand nor define, yet we use the term and think we know something of what it suggests. For from the time when Peter wrote of “Him Whom not having seen, ye love..... in Whom ye rejoice with joy unspeakable” till now, the records of the church abound with evidences of the sweetness of this holy and delightful ambrosia.

What an anthologia of rapturous expressions of personal delight in our blessed Savior and personal affection to Him, of the sense of His sweetness and loveliness, could be culled from even the musty tomes of “the Fathers” or the driest volumes of the school-theology of their children! It is worth while wading through the long pages of their puerilities to come to such words as these, for instance, from Augustine, “O Lord, I love Thee, Thou hast transfixed my heart. I could not be satiated with Thy wondrous sweetness.” The iron fetters of the somber theology of the dark centuries could not prevent St. Bernard from singing that beautiful hymn, “Jesus, the very thought of Thee With sweetness fills the breast “; nor prevent those outpourings of devout ecstasy from Thos. a Kempis and St. Francis de Sales. “The sacred humanity of our Lord,” says old Baxter, “is the most proportionable, delightful, sweet” and sings of “the flowers that grow in Christ's sweet meadows.” “O Christ, He is the fountain, The deep, sweet well of love,” says S. Rutherford. “When I say ‘Sweet Jesus' the third time,” said the Earl of Derwentwater to the executioner, “Then strike:” and he knelt down and put his neck on the block, saying, “Sweet Jesus, sweet Jesus, sweet.....,” but the ax fell all too soon.

Nor is it alone the cultured or intelligent that taste this sweetness. The poor Scotch idiot boy will babble about “you lovely Man “: and the poor dying Irishwoman cries, “Ma sheached mile gra,” “My seven thousand times beloved.” And with these expressions there is always a sense of heart-rest which shows us what a mysterious connection there is, as in this chapter, between the manna and the sabbath; as if one should hear the peaceful humming of the bees whilst he tastes the sweetness of the honey. “Thou hast made the heart for Thyself,” says the converted prodigal of old, “And it is restless until it finds its rest in Thee.” The converted captain of the slave-ship sings, “How sweet the name of Jesus sounds 'Tis manna to the hungry soul, And to the weary, rest.”

Chapter 174

Scripture Imagery: 62. The Amalekites, the Omer of Manna, the Water

The same creature will at different times of its existence entirely change its food, rejecting the old and relishing the new. The caterpillar gorges itself with cabbage-leaf whilst it crawls prone on the earth; but, when that mysterious change comes which transforms and glorifies it into an ethereal being flying over sunlit gardens, it cares nothing for the old gross food; it sips with delicacy and delight from the nectars of the flowers. The food of Egypt—the leeks, the onions, and the garlic—is of the earth, earthy, the roots which are palled out of the ground. The food of Canaan grows above the earth in the heavenly places—the fig, the vine, the pomegranate, the old corn of the land. Between the two is the wilderness where the food is different from either, coming down from heaven and resting on the earth—the heavenly Christ in humiliation, for which one must indeed stoop, but neither grovel nor burrow. Of this intermediate wilderness food an omer, that is, a full man's daily portion, is afterward laid up in the Ark of the Testimony, being perpetually kept as a treasure and memorial before the Lord by the people. When they reach the promised land, they will live by the other food referred to, which typifies Christ in resurrection and ascension—having fallen as a corn of wheat into the ground and died, and now no longer abiding alone. But each soul will forever treasure a full remembrance and appreciation of that lovely and holy human life, the contemplation of which was our spiritual strength and nourishment here. For this purpose the manna could be kept without losing its freshness during the sabbath (Millennium, Heb. 4) or throughout eternity. But when men sought to lay it by for other purposes, they were disappointed: if instead of appropriating Christ when He is proffered, while it is “to-day,” we presume to make a mere convenience of Him, we shall find no result but corruption and defilement: the proffered blessing becomes a curse.

The people reach Rephidim, and Moses is commanded to take the rod (of judgment) and with it to smite the Rock; on which the waters streamed forth, giving renewed life, cleansing and refreshment to the tribes. “That rock was Christ,” and, consequent on His sacred suffering under the judgment of God, the Holy Ghost proceeds forth with an exhaustless regenerating, purifying, and restoring power. (The learned critic confuses this event with one that occurs twenty years afterward in Num. 20, but there are some deeply instructive differences, which he calls discrepancies: chiefly that in Numbers Moses is not told to strike the rock, but to speak to it, for Christ, having once suffered, must not be put afresh to suffering. Also he is told to take the rod [of Aaron's priestly office]; he does take it, but smites the rock, and smites it with his own judicial rod, making a serious double mistake, as we are told in ver. 7.)

Then a remarkable change of attitude occurs. That which is connected with the manna is the sabbath with Christ comes rest; but when they get the Water, the Amalekites come and give them battle—with the Holy Ghost's advent is conflict. The disciples were to stay at Jerusalem until the promised Spirit was given; and then immediately began their tremendous struggle with the powers of evil—not before, for God does not let the battle commence till His soldiers are thus empowered

to meet the foe. A new leader is now required. The wise, all-comprehensive, shepherd-care of Moses continues ever; but an aggressive attitude is now to be assumed, and so Joshua leads in the van of, the host, and chooses lieutenants (Acts 13:2)—a type of the leadership in the power of the Holy Ghost of the people of God against their spiritual foes through the wilderness of life, whilst Moses, aloft in prayer, represents the simultaneous intercession of our Lord on high: if the intercession cease for a moment, the battle goes against them.

It is necessary that the redeemed people of God should have training and practice in warfare. Though strife in itself is so contrary to the divine nature, yet we are placed in conditions where it is necessary to fight earnestly and ceaselessly; therefore discipline and instruction are needed. David says, “He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.” There may be (to reason on Bp. Butler's lines) no need of conflict in the future life, but there may be every need for those qualities of character produced by conflict here, qualities that could be only produced by this means. “Plenty and peace breed cowards; hardness ever of hardiness is mother.” There are studies, such as mathematics, which we have to go through in our schooling days, which the bulk of us find no necessity for using in later life; but we always find the benefit of the logical habit and mental discipline that could be produced only by such studies. King Arthur's sword is hung up by his emblazoned shield never to be used in war again, but its record ennobles it. We know that fire, blows, and attrition have evolved temper, power, keenness, and beauty in it, and that these qualities forever remain; we know that the king's arm has wielded it against his foes in battle, and that, above all, is what glorifies Excalibur and distinguishes it from a piece of common metal.

And since these qualities have to be developed, and can only—so far as we know—be developed by conflict, it is one of the highest attributes of Christianity that it leads us to war, not against our fellowmen—much less against our fellow-Christians—but against the evil principles that assail both them and us. Its genius is presented in the similitude of a Physician Who, whilst He mercifully heals and saves men, grapples with and slays the malignant, lurking evils that fasten on them and seek to destroy them. The conflicts of the physician with ghastly and insidious disease, often in peril of his life, call for as much courage, energy, vigilance, and capacity as those of the soldier on the field of battle. The qualities needed are the same, but the tendency of their action is reversed. “The Son of God goes forth to war.....His blood-red banner streams afar; Who follows in His train? Who patient bears his cross below, He follows in His train.” Conflict may be in passive suffering and endurance as truly as in energetic assault.

Each of Israel's foes has its peculiar typical character and methods of warfare. The Amalekites represent those carnal and sinful principles which seek now in the wilderness to hinder and injure us. Their method of warfare—quite different from that of the politic Philistine or the brave Jebusite—was mean and cowardly: they “smote the hindmost all that were feeble.....when thou wast faint and weary,” a dastard foe that lies in wait for every subtle and unfair advantage against our souls—whom God has sworn to destroy and concerning whom He has commanded, “Then shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven—thou shalt not forget it.” Other foes might be treated leniently, but not this one. There must be no trace; no quarter-guerre a routrance.

If we indulge the evil fleshly nature, we are feeding Amalek instead of fighting him, and are traitors to our leader and cause. The synapta, or “sea cucumber,” has a power of great and rapid growth

when it has much to feed on—like the sinful principles within and around us; but when deprived of food, it has the power to shed off parts of its body, bit by bit, till there is little but the head left (that, indeed, is very slow to die, but it is not formidable without limbs to work with). The most effective way of fighting Amalek is by cutting off his supplies. He lingers long, and many times after he seems to have been entirely destroyed, we meet his accursed race in very unexpected places—Agag on the throne; Haman in the council-chamber; but the ruthless sword of the prophet shall hew Agag in pieces, and Haman shall perish on the gallows that he had designed for Mordecai.

Chapter 175

Scripture Imagery: 63. The General Assembly at the Mount of God

In contending with Amalek there is as great a necessity for praying (ver. 11) as for fighting: one is the complement of the other—as much so as eating and drinking; and one will not suffice without the other, or we may drift either into the dreamy fatalism of the hermit, or else into the barren “perpetual motion” of the sensationalist. Cromwell's maxim about the powder is sound theology; and though his troops were often seen on their knees by their enemies, they found they were not on their knees to them; their enemies never had the advantage of seeing them with their backs turned, anyway. There is no antagonism between prayer and energy, trust, and vigilance: true prayer will lead to energy; true energy will lead to prayerfulness. We should pray as if all depended on God, and fight as if all depended on us.

When Amalek has been conquered, the first thing to be established is naturally an altar. The principle of organized public worship is to be the distinguishing characteristic and most salient feature of the Pilgrim Nation, so Moses calls the altar Jehovah-Nissi, “the Lord my banner.”

For a fighting army always needs a standard, which forms, not only a rallying point and expression of unity, but an inspiring emblem of the Cause for which it is contending, and a public demonstration of the same. There are few evidences of the power of sentiment and symbolism so great as the banner—a mere piece of silk or bunting, with a name or rough figure on it, intrinsically worth only a few shillings; yet warriors will grapple in deadly fray around it, the young ensign's eye glaze in death as, he tries to hold it, and one man after another will spring forward and pour out his heart's blood in its defense. For this reason all that sentiment can do, to invest a banner with every accessory that can awaken and sustain enthusiasm is usually accomplished: sovereigns personally present the regimental flags, while the chief religious dignitaries pronounce their benedictions on them amid circumstances of the utmost pageantry. On Israel's banner is inscribed the august name of JEHOVAH, and it requires no addition of party name, symbol or shibboleth. It is great enough for us all to fight under—so be it that we fight not one another, but Amalek. Nor shall we be allowed either to monopolize it or to rip it into sections (this is an abnormal taste truly, which would prefer a section of a flag to the whole, yet, strange to say, the taste exists). And we can rest assured that, like the battle flag of the old Norse champion, which, though fatal to him that carried it, ultimately led all that followed it to victory, this banner of the Lord shall advance from strength to strength, until it waves on the ramparts of Zion.

The passage that then follows is an adumbration of that time of final triumph. The clouds open and reveal to us a radiant and glorious vision on the MOUNT OF GOD of Moses receiving Zipporah from Jethro the Gentile, while Gershom and Eliezer stand by, and the hosts of the warriors and chiefs surround them, having by the power of God overcome their enemies and reached their (immediate) goal. So the divine Savior shall be revealed in the future with the spiritual Bride who came from the Gentile home; while the upright Gentile of Matt. 25, who is received with a kiss of peace and affection, is allowed to sacrifice, and the Jewish remnant in “two bands” (Gershom and Eliezer) are received there in friendship and safety in the presence of the myriads of the

Redeemed, whose conflicts and sufferings are over.

Thus do we see that, however broken and incoherent the divine purposes may seem to be during their development, at some period or other, in time or eternity, they grow naturally and certainly to a denouement which is perfect in beauty and splendor. There is in the classics a vision of vapors rising—heavy and vague—from a great plain; but as the sun shines on them they gradually assume the semblance of a noble city with “cloud-capped towers, solemn temples and gorgeous palaces,” which seems risen from the ground as an exhalation indeed, but an exhalation of glory and magnificence, like “the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God.”

We can as yet see only “through a glass darkly,” and know only “in part.” Let us not judge prematurely of the ways of the Most High; they tend toward a glorious goal. The grand and resplendent consummation of which we have the type shall assuredly come, but we must wait until the solar light from the battlements of heaven shall shine on these seeming earth-clouds. Shall we judge of the building whilst the scaffolding with its litter of ropes and rude timbers encloses the unfinished walls? or of the ship whilst still on the stocks? or of the tapestry whilst it is in a cluster of running threads in the midst of jangling wheels, all driving in contrary directions? How many shapes of ugliness does the clay take as the potter's thumb touches it on the flying wheel before at last it reaches its perfection of symmetry? “We see but dimly through the mists and vapors, Amid these earthly damps; What seem to us but sad funereal tapers May be heaven's distant lamps.” And what seems to us but as a mass of clouds overhead shall soon open and reveal the unutterable glories of the constellations of the accomplished purposes of God, all governed by that supreme Pole-star whom He has appointed as the pivot of “the vast universe of bliss.”

Moreover, the Pole-star is a double star. And what a strange mystery that double star is!—two distinct globes, yet seeming but one by reason of their mingled luster; one sphere of light forever circling round another; each consecrated to the companionship of the other, yet together projecting their combined light far through the darkness of infinite space; each one gleaming with the complementary colors of the other, and together combining a glory of radiance blended into one pure light, which streams out upon a universe teeming with the multiform phases of perennial life. “This is THE GREAT MYSTERY; but I speak concerning Christ and concerning the church.” “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handywork!”

Chapter 176

Scripture Imagery: 64. Law and Testimony

The course of Israel, as illustrating God's dealings and purposes with the redeemed people, culminates in the supreme and resplendent glories of the General Assembly on the holy mount. It is the close of a record of absolute grace on the one side and absolute unworthiness on the other. We now come to the consideration of a new aspect of things altogether: namely, the history of Israel, (1) as illustrating man under the law; and (2) as being the repository of the principles of (a) divine service and (b) divine testimony.

“All other nations but the Jewish,” says S. T. Coleridge, “seem to look backwards, and also to exist in the present; but in the Jewish scheme everything is prospective and preparatory: nothing, however trifling, is done for itself alone; but all is typical of something yet to come." “Old Fuller” has an ingenious conceit to the effect that “the Hebrew tongue hath no proper present tense, but two future tenses.” The author of Religio Medici says, “It is not unremarkable what Philo first observed, that the law of Moses continued two thousand years without the least alteration; whereas we see the laws of other commonwealths do alter with occasions; and even those that pretend their original from some divinity too have vanished without trace or memory.” Even Renan, whose difficult task it is to put as changeable and evolutionary an appearance on the Jewish system as possible, says, “This organism was completed 450 years [more like 1450, though] before Christ. Judaism then became an abridgment of all the religious work of the world.“

Thus do even the smallest actions of the Jews become magnified and thrown forward over the field of the world's vision, as in the specter of the Brocken in Hungary, when the traveler sees his shadow projected by the light behind him athwart the whole sky, enormously enlarged in all its dimensions: when he raises his walking-stick or casts a stone on the ground, the projected shadow seems like Odin plucking up a tree by the roots, or Jupiter casting Mount Aetna on Typhon.

In considering the Jewish records then we are not merely studying ancient history, but contemporary history, of principles and events such as we are now passing through. So when Israel is placed under the law he is tested as representing all mankind, and when he has the sanctuary and testimony committed to him, he is privileged on behalf of the whole race: it is not merely national or parochial, it is cosmic. To test the whole world in any other way so as to give a definite historic result would be manifestly impossible. The principle is the same as that which we see going on all day long in every-day life: in nearly all cases of trading the buyer only sees a small sample of the merchandise that he is invited to purchase. It is impossible for him to see, taste, and smell the whole bulk. So the hand is pushed into the corn sack, cotton bale, or tea chest, and a little taken out to represent the whole; or the “valinch” is plunged into the wine-butt and withdrawn with a sample so small that its absence is not missed, yet by it both buyer and seller agree to abide. If it be satisfactory, well and good; if not, the bulk is judged by the sample and rejected. And this last is what happened when Israel's corruption was finally proved: the time of probation was ended, and it was said, “Now is the judgment of this world.”

The law is given amid circumstances of appalling grandeur, with lurid “fire, and blackness, and darkness, and tempest,” in contrast with the gospel,, which came in with the symbolism of luminous tongues—the law being given in one language, the gospel in all; the law to condemn, the gospel to save; the law to detect what was lacking, the gospel to supply it; the law to disclose sin, the gospel to disclose righteousness; the law to pronounce judgment, the gospel to proclaim mercy; the law to detect man, the gospel to reveal God. The law's commands are numerous, negative, and complicated; the gospel's command is simple and single— “That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ” and “love one another.”

Yet “the law is holy. . . . and just, and good,” and perfectly adapted to the testing purpose to which it. has been applied, and also to the purpose for which it has been designed, of being a “schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” This figure implies a preparatory stage of things during a period of immaturity, at the expiration of which is found the liberty of Christ, which, the Galatians so little understood. But that liberty no more implies license than the liberty of a youth freed from the authority of his schoolmaster implies freedom from the restraints of the amenities of honor and propriety. “Liberty” is bounded by “Christ.” Usually we have a stronger regard for, and appreciation of, our schoolmasters when we reach maturity than we ever had before. We certainly do not wish to destroy them—that would be antinomian—nor to continue in subjection to them—that were—to be Galatian and antichristian.

Of (2a) the principles of divine service anon. But of (2b) the testimony I may here say that Israel has certainly at all times been a powerful evidence to God's rule and the character of it in the earth. “Ye are My witnesses;” and not only so in being the custodians of the divine oracles, but in themselves and in respect of their whole history whether in good or evil. For infinite wisdom had so adjusted the matter that whilst they jealously guarded and carried about those scriptures that condemned nearly every step they took, even their national sins and judgments were evidences that those oracles were divinely inspired. The more deeply this is considered the more will be seen the wisdom of the reply which Frederick the Great's chaplain made when the king asked him for an evidence in brief of the inspiration of scripture. He answered, “The Jews, sire.” And very powerful negative evidence to this comes just now from an opponent. Henan says, “It was only eighteen hundred years after Jesus Christ that the work of the Jewish people met with the first severe blow [from those of his own line of thought]. It then became doubtful to minds that were at all cultivated whether the things of this world were ruled by a just God.” This is naive, but very important: the Jewish people have carried the evidence of the role of a just God over the whole earth even till now. It is true that some small scientists are stated to have recently upset the whole thing; but perhaps it may even survive that. (We seem to remember that a brilliant fellow-countryman of M. Renan claimed to have done something of the sort a century ago, when he said that it took twelve men to build up Christianity and only one (i.e., himself) to pull it down. Still, somehow it survived and used his own house Afterward to print Bibles in.)

The purpose of God is sure to be brought about. If He says to the Jews, “Ye are My witnesses,” they shall be so in one way or another. He does not light candles to put them under beds or bushels: if they are not a testimony in the burning and shining light of obedience and blessing, they shall be so in the gross darkness of sin and curse. If not by a flaming candle, it shall be by a smoking candle. And no one can hide it; Pharaoh and many another tried to do so, but, like the man in the Indian proverb who tried to shut up the sun, moon, and stars in three chests, with very

imperfect success.

Chapter 177

Scripture and Science

We hear a good deal in these days about the conciliation of science and faith—, of aids to faith. One attempts to prove that scripture is really scientific, and so on, but is not all this based upon a delusion? If we have a revelation from God, what does it matter whether science accords with it or not? If it do not, then so much the worse for science. But even pious men, who really believe the word of God, are often so much afraid of the fetish of science, that they make all haste to prove that the Bible is really, if those great of “light and leading” would only graciously allow it, the humble handmaid of science.

Now all this kind of thing will not do: the evidences of a revelation are altogether apart from science. “He that doeth His will shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.” “He that believeth hath the witness in himself” And if (as we KNOW is the truth) the Son of God has been in this world, that one transcendent fact dominates everything, and claims my immediate and absolute surrender. When once [believe this, science, marvelous as are its achievements, is after all a very small thing. It may be admirable for this life (though it be questionable how far torpedoes, for instance, are an unmixed advantage), yet it is only for this life; and the supreme fact of the incarnation and atonement of the blessed Son of God, even my apprehension of it, and bowed belief in it, and contrition of heart resulting from this belief, become the only important things. By faith we KNOW that the Son of God has come, and we are not careful to answer our opponents as to all that they allege, sometimes honestly, sometimes captiously, against the word of God, for that there are immense, perhaps inexplicable, difficulties in the Bible, no one can doubt. But the blessed book does not. teach science. It is meant for the heart and the conscience.

It is notorious, on the other hand, that links are wanting in scientific processes. Dare any one affirm that were they all known and applied, science and the Bible would still be at variance? It is conceivable at least that the whole system of geological and physiological theory may have to be recast. Perhaps then fuller accord will be found between the Bible and science than at present obtains. But whether it be so or not, it can make no difference to the Christian; for he rests upon the word of the living God, Who cannot lie. R. B. JR.

Chapter 178

Scripture Queries and Answers: Ecclesiastes 4

Q. What is the meaning of the closing verses in Eccl. 4? More particularly, who, or what, is “the second child that shall stand up in his stead?” The R.V. does not seem clearer than the A.V.

J.D.

A. From the sorrow and trial of isolation in this world, the royal preacher turns to the wretchedness of despising counsel, on the one hand, and to the vanity of reckoning on the stable loyalty of the multitude on the other: men worship the rising sun. The R.V. is more forcible here. “Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who knoweth not how to receive admonition any more. For out of prison he came forth to be king; yea, even in his kingdom he was born poor.” Such an one who from such a low origin came to the greatest height of earthly dignity ought of all men to take heed when old, and to watch against self-will so natural in his circumstances. “I saw all the living which walk under the sun that they were with the youth, the second that stood up in his stead. There was no end of all the people, even of all them over whom he was; yet they that come after shall not rejoice in him.” The youth, “the second,” is so in relation to the old king become unpopular (not the second of two youths). The first was the father who was raised to the throne; the second, his son that followed. Men grow weary of each in turn. Surely this also is vanity and a feeding on wind (or striving after it).

Chapter 179

The Second Advent: 1. Before, Not After, the Millennium

Scripture is not only the mine, but the standard, of truth. Error cannot stand before the inspired word. Not that the believer is competent of himself either to draw out or to apply aright; our sufficiency is from God, Who also made us sufficient, says the apostle, as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Every Christian cites 1 Thess. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:16, &c.; v. 2; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; 2:1, 2, 8; 3:5, to prove that Christ's coming, or παρουσ■α, is our hope, and that His day will bring judgment on the world. With all this, it is allowed, the apostle's later Epistles agree, as do those of James, Peter, John, and Jude. It is not otherwise with the Gospels.

But it is a strange position to except the Book of Revelation, especially chap. 20:1-8, unless we concede the synchronism of ver. 8, 9, with 2 Thess. 2:8! Even so it is confessed that the very great difficulty is involved of a preliminary victory over Satan earlier than the final victory. “But possibly,” says Professor Beet, “the events of Rev. 19:11; 20:4, may take place without any interruption of the ordinary course of human life” (p. 30)! Let the Christian read and judge.

To what is all this unbelieving perplexity owing? To the notion that Christ's coming cannot possibly be followed by the millennium and its subsequent conflict, and must therefore follow these events.

But is this true? What saith the scripture?

The Lord taught the disciples, not merely that He was to return from heaven, but that they were to be as men looking for Him. “Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him” (Luke 12:35-36). Of a millennium to intervene first, not a word. What is said rather excludes it; for will it be a “little flock” as now, when “Jehovah's people shall be all righteous,” and “all nations shall flow” unto the mountain of Jehovah's house? Christ's coming was not a mere doctrine assented to nor a prophetic event at such or such a date. A living hope was bound up with His coming—they knew not how soon. The Lord laid the utmost stress on their state of habitual expectancy—that when He comes and knocks, they may open immediately unto Him. “Blessed are those (He adds, ver. 37) whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching.” This goes far beyond mere acquiescence that He will come at some distant date.

Prof. Beet treats this attitude even now, and of course a fortiori of old, as a mistake. “It was near to the thought of the early Christians;” yet he agrees with the infidel that it was an error. “It must be at once admitted that we cannot, with reasonable confidence, expect a return of Christ during the lifetime of men now living. Still less can we daily expect His return” (pp. 149, 150). This with a vengeance is the higher criticism of modern thought.

It is really bolder than any man should be with (not apostles only but) the Lord of all. Did not He know the truth? Did He deliberately set His own to watch in a way open to Gibbon's sneer or Mr.

B.'s correction? Did He not encourage them to watch for His coming from heaven as the only right state of soul? His teaching is uniformly to this end: so much so that He characterized the evil servant in Matt. 24:48 by saying in his heart, “My lord tarrieth,” the prelude to beating his fellow-servants, and to eating and drinking with the drunken.

In accordance with this the Lord presents the virgins in the following parable as gone forth to meet the bridegroom. Such in fact was the position of the early Christians, the wise and the foolish alike. The Lord warned that during His delay they would all go asleep, as they all did. This was but partially “in the days of the apostles “; but it became worse and worse not long after. Certain it is, as He predicted, that soon “they all slumbered and slept.” But the Lord also indicates that “at midnight,” when all was darkest, there is a cry, Behold the bridegroom! Come (or, Go) ye forth to meet him. Then what activity! all arose and trimmed their lamps. It is this cry that awakes slumbering christendom. When the foolish are in quest of the grace they lack, the wise resume the original place so long abandoned by the saints, the bridegroom comes, and those that were ready go in with him to the marriage feast. The foolish and unready come to find the door was shut. It is false that our Lord's return was not expected as a constant outlook “by His better informed followers.”

Nothing was revealed in prophecy to blunt the edge of that hope. The Lord seems to have expressly provided that His own, however intelligent, might be kept, expecting Him as habitually as the simplest. Thus, as far as parabolic language goes, none could infer that the same saints should not go out to meet Him, fall asleep, wake up, go out afresh and in with Him to the wedding. On this principle are all the parables constructed: the wheat-and-tare field, the mustard-seed, the leaven, and the rest in Matt. 13, in no way forbid but fall in with waiting for Him in their life-time, whatever may be the filling up of the sketch as He tarries. It was the due posture of hope, which all the truth strengthens instead of weakening. Our Lord did predict in Luke 21, as well as in ch. 19, the near approaching destruction of Jerusalem: did this hinder it? Why, it also was in that one life-time; and the next event described is His judicial dealing with mankind when seen coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Even Peter's death, and John's survival, are carefully so presented in John 21 and 2 Peter 1 as not to interfere with watching for Christ. A special revelation of the apostle's death left all open for the heart, and Peter recalls it only when about to depart. But he does more. In the same chapter 1 of his Second Epistle he distinguishes between “the prophetic word,” and the “day-star arising in the heart.” The former they had known, even in their unconverted days; and they did well to pay heed to it still. But now they had, or at least ought in the gospel to have, a better light than the lamp of prophecy shining in the “squalid place” of the earth as it is. As Christians they should enjoy the heavenly light that shines through the rent veil, and Christ Himself as the morning star for the heart's hope, before the sun of righteousness cannot be hid from the world. It is therefore ignorance of scripture, and a misuse of prophecy, to let any supposed intervening events check the hope of Christ's coming. The Lord, and the apostles, down to the last chapter of the Book of Revelation, always and strenuously make the hope independent of prophecy, not by a fanciful sentimentality, but by a revealed difference in nature and character. The hope is of Christ for heaven. Prophecy treats of events for the earth; which a better knowledge of the word learns to be subsequent. There is no earthly sign revealed to intercept the hope of Christ's coming for us, to receive us to Himself.

Now there are no Epistles of Paul so full of the hope as those to the Thessalonians. There, therefore, we may surely look not merely for better information, but for the unerring light of God.

Did the apostle then lead the saints in Thessalonica to look for the millennium before Christ's coming? He taught them, turning from their idols, as a part of their conversion, to wait for God's Son from heaven as well as to serve a living and true God (1 Thess. 1:10). And so filled was he for himself with this bright hope that in his labors this is his one unfailing joy, not any proximate prospect for European Asia or the world at large, but “Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming”? So he prays that the Lord would give them to abound in love to the establishing of their hearts in holiness before our God and Father at our Lord's coming with all His saints He will not, does not, sever “that day” from the actual moment in his desires for them and all. Then chap. 4 is worthy of close attention. The Christians at Thessalonica, were so intent on the immediate coming of Christ, that they grieved excessively over one or more of their number who had died. This was just the occasion to tell them, as so many do, that death is to all practical purposes the coming of Christ to that individual. Whatever analogy people may frame, the apostle presents our Lord's coming as the divine comfort and remedy for, or rather His triumph over, it. But he does this in a way which demonstrates the fundamental antagonism of post-millennialism to the. true hope. “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord that we that are alive, that are left Tinto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep” (ver. 15). The same formula he carefully repeats in vers. 16, 17: “and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air” &c. If the express intention of the Holy Spirit had been to set the apostle with the saints, then living, in looking for Christ always, assured of His coming soon but not knowing when, could any words be conceived more suited to the purpose? How easy to have put “those who might be alive” when He comes, in the third person—to have said “they,” as he did say of the deceased.

Nor is it here and now only that the inspired writer so speaks. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, written after both those to the Thessalonians, we find precisely the same thing in his great vindication of the resurrection, when he adds a secret as to the saints found alive at the advent. “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.....for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor. 15:51, 52). Compare also 2 Cor. 5:1-10, converging on the same point. It is therefore the clearly maintained principle of a proximate, not an ultimate, hope. The language of scripture joins issue with the theology of the schools. Christendom has lost the tongue of Canaan, because the truth is no longer a living reality for men. The apostle put no date, and made not a shade of error. Like his Master, he in the Spirit would have the saints ever waiting and looking for Christ's coming.

Beyond controversy the early part of 1 Thess. 5 speaks of the day of the Lord in a way wholly different from that which prevails among our “negative” brethren. It is judicial for the world which it will overtake as a thief in the night, but not the Christian who certainly ought not to be in darkness, that that day should overtake him so How could it surprise any suddenly if it cannot be before a thousand years of peace beyond example? The coming of the Lord rightly held presupposes the believer resting on redemption, sealed with the Holy Spirit of God, and already meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Those who confound the Lord's coming and His day are as the rule in a like confusion as to the soul; they rarely distinguish aright the work of Christ for them and of the Spirit in them. In such a condition they rather dread, than welcome, the coming of the Lord,

and willingly drop into the illusion “of great progress and of indisputable improvement, both in the churches and in society at large.” “To these must be added the many triumphs of the foreign mission field. Before our eyes Christ” “is going forth conquering and to conquer” (p. 151). How averse such minds are and must be from the solemn warnings of divine judgment! Yet how plain and sober is scriptural truth! Hear the scriptures that speak of God's purpose to fill the earth with His glory and the knowledge of it: Num. 14:21; Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14. In all these the connection is with His judicial dealings, not with our preaching the gospel. Nothing is so blinding, and self-exalting, as unbelief.

Could a better informed follower of Christ say that the Thessalonians, “like many others since, had misunderstood Paul to teach that the Great Day was close at hand"? (p. 150). Really such misunderstanding, both of Paul and of the Thessalonians, is discreditable, though a too prevalent error. It is no opinion but a fact, now recognized by the Revisers, as well as by all recent translators and reliable commentators, that the ground of such an impression is a mere blunder, though it misled every body for more than a thousand years. I pointed it out to my friend Dr. D. Brown many years ago, while he lived in Glasgow, before exposing it in public. Yet there it stands uncorrected still in the sixth edition of his “Second Coming” (pp. 4, 5, 42-51, 425-433), though he has not ventured to controvert, as I am persuaded neither he nor any other can fairly overthrow, the evidence of it. The delusion which alarmed the Thessalonians was the cry that the day of the Lord was actually come (■υ■στηκευ); and the apostle beseeches them by, or for the sake of (■π■ρ), the reassuring hope of the Lord's coming and our gathering together unto Him, not to be shaken about that day. First, it was the disturbance of fear, and this through the false alarm that the day had come, not at all excitement about the blessed hope; which hope on the contrary is appealed to as a reason by the way to comfort them against their groundless alarm. Secondly, the true text and translation of the last clause in 2 Thess. 2:2 is, beyond doubt, “as that the day of the Lord is present.”

Dr. Brown and Prof. B. are under a delusion here about God's word less excusable than that of the Thessalonian saints. Not only do they wholly mistake what was at work then and there, but they set thereby the apostle at war with himself. For their misunderstanding makes him explode here what he urges later on the Romans (13:12), that the day is at hand (■γγικεν). Compare too Phil. 4:5, Heb. 10:37. James speaks similarly (James 5:8); and so substantially Peter (1 Peter 4:7). Indeed the Lord had Himself impressed His coming suddenly as a motive for all to watch in the early Gospel of Mark (13:35-37); and none other is what we may call, pace Prof. B., His last word closing the Apocalypse. It seems clearly meant to hinder that fatal misuse of the prophetic visions, which enfeebles, if not frustrates, the divinely given hope of His coming. “He which testifieth these things saith, Yea, I come quickly.” Did John cavil or correct his Master? He answered, “Amen; come, Lord Jesus.”

The apostle next explains that the day—for this was the question, not His coming to gather us to Himself on high, but His day or judicial dealing with the world—cannot be till the evils are completely developed, which that day is to judge. Of these he specifies the apostasy, the falling away from God's truth after being once professed; and further the revelation of the lawless one, as the consummation of the mystery of lawlessness already at work. Once the actual hinderer was removed, the lawlessness doing its secret evil would culminate and be manifested in the lawless one whom the Lord Jesus shall slay (or destroy) with the breath (or spirit) of His mouth, and shall

bring to naught by the shining forth (or appearing) of His coming—not by His coming simply, but by the appearing of it. Now when Christ, our life, shall be manifested, then (τ■τε, not ε■τα) shall we also with Him be manifested in glory (Col. 3:4). It is the moment of His and our appearing, after we have been caught up to Him.

Prof. B. abandons the Protestant interpretation of the apostasy or at least of the man of sin. What unbiased Christian can wonder? “There is nothing now corresponding in the least degree to the tremendous antagonist of God and man described in 2 Thess. 2:4 (p. 150).” This may be true as to the person, but the principles are latently at work; and it is unwise to speak as he does of the slow development in modern times of forces bad, if not of good. The passage itself, if we were not living in an age of movement intensely rapid in every sense, most naturally prepares us for the most sudden display of the son of perdition, depending as this does simply on the removal of him that restraineth now. Undoubtedly the worst evil, the lawless person, must be revealed before that day which is to annul him; but to say that the day is not near is flatly to contradict the word of the living God, as well as ignorance of what the text here teaches. Only Mr. B. is to be congratulated for breaking loose from the post-millennial argument, under which others still lie, that the παρουσ■α of our Lord in ver. 1 is His personal advent, in ver. 8 is only figurative. This sleight of hand Prof. B. repudiates (p. 22). He owns it is the same throughout; but where then is his millennium before Christ comes? The text reveals a continuity of unbridled willfulness, already working as leaven, till it rise (on the removal of an existing barrier) into a revealed head, the lawless one to fall under the Lord Jesus in His day. How then possibly foist in there the millennium before that day? The Thessalonians, misled as they were by the delusion of a judgment-day already come, fell into no such a preposterous dream as this truly strange doctrine.

It is unfounded then, as a commentator ought to have known, a mere vulgar error, that the Thessalonians had misunderstood the Apostle Paul. He himself gives quite a different source of the mischief. He speaks of either a word, or spirit, or epistle as from us, i.e., pretending so to be. It was not his First Epistle misunderstood, but a spurious communication that is meant; for the apostle never taught anything in the least resembling it. The misleaders must have insinuated a figurative day of the Lord under the gospel, answering to such partial or germinant applications of that day as we have in Isa. 13; 19, &c., on Babylon, Egypt, &c. For the Thessalonian saints were passing through sore trial and persecution; so that he had sent Timothy even before his First Epistle, lest by any means the tempter had tempted them to the compromise of their faith and of his own labor. He foresaw their danger of being moved by these afflictions. It seems to have been just in this way that Satan was now working.

Before the First Epistle they were so enthusiastic as to be cast down exceedingly because some fell asleep; for they imagined that these would thereby lose their place at Christ's coming. This was dispelled by the assurance that these also put to sleep by Jesus will God bring with Him; for, when He descends from heaven with an assembling shout, the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we the living that remain shall be caught up together with them. But the more serious error corrected in the Second Epistle is about the living on whom the false teachers sought to bring the terror of the day of the Lord, availing themselves probably of their sore trials as indicating that the day was come. Not so says the apostle in chap. i. In that day the trouble will be to the persecutors and other wicked men; the righteous are to rest. Their blessed hope of being gathered to the Lord at His coming ought to have guarded them from such a panic. Besides, that day can only arrive when

secret lawlessness is replaced (the barrier being gone) by the openly lawless one whom the Lord Jesus will destroy by the appearance of His coming. Not misunderstanding but positive deception marked the misleaders. They were Judaisers; and they wrought by fear of that day as come, not by the hope of the Lord's coming, as not a few imagine. Beyond doubt a previous millennium can find no place either in the thoughts of the Thessalonians or in the apostle's words.

It is hard to understand why 1 Cor. 1:7, 9, or 1 Cor. 15:23, 52, or 2 Cor. 5:10, should be adduced (pp. 22, 23). They are appropriate and forcible for those who believe in waiting for the coming of Christ in His day; but how do they even appear to furnish the shadow of an argument for an antecedent millennium of earthly blessedness? Is there any reality or even show of proof in the Synoptic Gospels to which we are next turned (p. 23)? Where is there a millennium before Christ's coming in Matt. 13? 16? or 24?

What evidence there is is clean opposed to the post-millennial plan. The tares sown among the wheat are never removed till the harvest; and the harvest the Lord explains as the completion of the age (σ. το■ α■■νοςa), not the end of the world, which “world” is expressly distinguished only in the verse before (Matt. 13:38, 39). Where is the millennium here before the second advent?

The same objection applies with yet more force to the use made of chap. xvi. 27. Does this text prove a millennium before it? When the Son of Man comes, He awards to each according to his doing. Is this only to be cast into the lake of fire?

Prof. Beet, indeed, allows the just force of συντ■λεια το■ α■■νος to be “completion of the age.” Now Matt. 12:32 speaks of “the age to come,” as well as of “this age,” which was to end with His coming. What is meant? Does it not signify the future age when the Messiah should reign, as distinguished from the age of the law not yet come to its close? Blasphemy against the Spirit shall be forgiven in neither. Whatever may be pardoned in either age, that cannot be. That is, this age and the coming one are two dispensations. The nature of the case excludes the eternal scene where there is no question of either sin or its forgiveness. If there be an α■■ν to come after this which is closed by the Lord's coming, what can it be but the millennium? Heb. 6:5 confirms this. The powers of the “age to come” mean samples of such power over Satan, disease, and the like, which the disciples wrought when Christ was here and subsequently; of which the age to come will be the full theater, and display to God's glory, when Satan's overthrow will be manifest all over the earth.

But there is yet more to observe in Matt. 13:41, 42. Does anyone doubt that it is of the harvest-field, the world, our Savior speaks as His kingdom, whither at His coming His angels are sent to gather out all offenses (or trap-falls) and those that practice lawlessness? On the other hand, who can question that, when the earth is thus purged (not yet dissolved or destroyed) for the Son of man's kingdom, then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father? It is the age to come before eternity, the millennial age, wherein are the glorified on high, and the earth delivered from the usurper and blessed under the reign of Christ. For, as the Lord taught in the Fourth Gospel, God's kingdom comprises, not only “earthly things,” as to which Nicodemus was so dull, but “heavenly things,” which only came to full light when Christ was glorified, and the Spirit could lead into them those who enjoyed redemption through His blood.

A King reigning in righteousness will characterize the new age. Now the Lord sits on the Father's throne; then He will sit on His own throne and will rule with a rod of iron, shattering all that rebel as the vessels of the potter. So it will be in the age to come or millennium. How absurd to apply this to the eternity that succeeds! As it has been well remarked, righteousness dwells in the new heavens and new earth when the promise is fulfilled absolutely and forever. It is no question then of righteous government which represses or punishes evil, as in the millennial day. Neither is it this “evil age” when grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Now the Lord asks, or prays, not for the world, but for His own, the gift of the Father. By and by, when this age is to close, and the coming one to dawn, He asks the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. It will be no question then of the mysteries of the kingdom during which He is the rejected but glorified Son of °M. Man. Having received for Himself the kingdom (Dan. 7, Luke 19), He returns. During His absence His servants, according to the parable, trade with the money entrusted, and on His return receive according to fidelity; as the citizens who hated Him and would not let Him reign over them are slain before Him. Here is without doubt the coming of Christ, but not a hint of a millennium before it; whilst the character of the judgment executed at His coming perfectly suits a millennium, not an eternity to follow.

The same lesson flows from Luke 17, where the days of Noah and of Lot are by Himself compared with the day when the Son of Man is revealed. Here is not the smallest resemblance to the loosing of Satan and the war of Grog and Magog in Rev. 20, any more than to the past siege of Jerusalem by Titus. Before the Lord appears in judgment it will be so, as we may see in 1 Thess. 5. When His day comes as a thief, it will overtake them eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building, marrying and given in marriage. How strange to apply ver. 31 to the dissolution of all things! or even to the destruction of Jerusalem! It is neither an indiscriminate judgment in providence, with which vers. 34, 35 stand in marked contrast, nor yet the last judgment, with h which not a feature tallies. It is simply and only the Lord's appearing, with the millennium to follow this judgment of the quick which it cannot precede.

But we must not omit Matt. 25:31-46. How any sober Christian can turn this scene into the counterpart of Rev. 20:11-15 is inexplicable, if one knew not the power of prejudice. The latter is expressly a judgment of the dead, without one living man; the other not even of all living men, but only of all the Gentiles or nations, the Jews being before us in the early part of chap. xxiv., and professing Christians in the great parables that close chap. xxiv. and go on to chap. 25:30. Hence it is the King as such Who judges the Gentiles on their treatment of His envoys, His brethren; and they are set as sheep on His right or as goats on His left accordingly. This is wholly foreign to the judgment of the dead at the end of all in Rev. 20, the “resurrection of judgment;” as ver. 4-6 gave us the previous “resurrection of life,” answering to John 5 That of the righteous only is before us in John 6 Thess. 4, and 1 Cor. 15. As this is a resurrection from among the dead, it is necessarily prior, like Christ's, to that of the remaining dead. And ε■τα"then” may be a long interval as easily as a short; just as “hour” and “day” may last a thousand years and more, as the context proves. But where in all these texts, or in any of them, is Prof. B.'s millennium before the Second Advent?

“Throughout St. Paul's Epistles and the Gospels, to which we might add the Book of Acts and the Epistles of James and Peter and Jade, we find everywhere the same metaphors and the same phraseology” (p. 26). So say those opposed. But let us read on. “The early Christians were looking for Christ's sudden and visible return from heaven, to raise the dead, good and bad, to judge all

men, and to bring in eternal retribution.” Really this is a perplexing argument from one whose theme is that Christ's coming must follow the millennium. Rev. 20:1-8 is therefore the mill-stone around the Professor's neck, which must be somehow got rid of and cast into the sea, if possible.

Now it is wholly denied that the blessed manifested kingdom of Christ rests on that passage only of the N. T., while the O. T. prophets are full of it, yea law, Psalm and prophets. Take Acts 3:19-21, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and He may send Jesus Christ, Who hath been fore-appointed unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, of which God spoke by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Seasons of refreshing were to come from the Lord's presence, Who would send Jesus that had been foreappointed for them (Israel's repentance being in full view, as usually for the millennium). Heaven must receive Him till times for restoring all things according to prophecy. That is, Jesus will be sent to bring in these blessed times when all things shall be (not destroyed, as in Prof. Beet's scheme, but) reconstituted, as the prophets of old testified. Christ will come from heaven to earth in order to establish millennial blessing. The Greek must be wholly altered to bear the meaning “till all be accomplished.”

Christ is on high till times come of restoring all, not till all shall have been restored. Having received the kingdom, He returns in it, and must reign till He has put all His enemies under His feet; for He is to abolish all rule, and all authority, and power, before He gives up the kingdom at the end of all. The repentance of Israel, the return of Jesus, the restoring of all things, besides fulfillment of the prophetic word, point to the millennial kingdom.

Again, Luke 20:34, 35, is entitled to great weight on this head, as it also confirms what has been already said on Matt. 12; 13, and Heb. 6 “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage; but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead,” &c. Before eternity arrives “that age” is to run its course, as well as “this age” to close. And “that age,” or dispensation, is characterized here by “the resurrection of the just,” those counted worthy to have part in that age and the resurrection from the dead. How contrasted with the dead who, unworthy and unblessed and unholy, are only raised, after “that age” is over, for a resurrection of judgment and the lake of fire! Scripture never speaks of a general resurrection but of two distinct risings—of life, and of judgment, separated by the kingdom of Christ and those who reign with Him, the only age when these thousand years of blessing for the earth that now is can be in consistency with scripture. Compare Phil. 3:11, 20, 21. To say that the resurrection be v. from the dead is not as peculiar by priority of time as well as in nature, accompaniments and issues, is to give up the force of language as well as description and context. The phrase itself is so weighty that one of the ablest, stumbled by faulty pre-millennialists made, the wrong vulgar reading in Phil. 3:11 a chief ground of objection, as Griesbach strangely accepted it. It is now exploded by all critics. What would the late Mr. Gipps have said now?

The more one weighs Prof. B.'s words on the Book of Revelation generally, and on chap. 20. especially, the less one can accept them. “That this event” — “the one definite event for which the early Christians were waiting,” Christ's return— “is less conspicuous in the Book of Revelation (!) than in the rest of the New Testament (!!) excites no surprise” (p. 27)!!! To ordinary Christians this seems as surprising a deliverance as one has heard for a long while. The reason is as peculiar as

the conclusion. The other writers leave us outside the veil (which is untrue); “the Revelation takes us within, and portrays the unseen world before, and during, and after, the coming of Christ.” And therefore! in a book which is thus instinct with what is before, and during, and after Christ's coming, this event is less conspicuous than elsewhere, where it is touched on for the most part practically, and but occasionally if we except 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Q. H. D.

“The question nevertheless remains, Where, amid the many and various visions of this mysterious book, shall we place the great event,” &c. Yes, this is just Prof. B.'s difficulty, because he is not content to believe it where God has placed it and written it for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope. “The only answer” to this question which seems good in his eyes is, that we must not leave it where “this mysterious book” gives it, and we must “place” it, where this book testifies that Christ does not and cannot come. In Rev. 20:11 there is total and manifest contrast with Christ's coming found in the Gospels and Epistles, save the fact of Christ's sitting on a throne (which is true generally of His reign for a thousand years and more, to say nothing of His present seat on His Father's throne). Is it seriously contended that the twelve sitting as assessors on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, symbolizes with the eternal judgment of the dead? Then is the time when 1 Cor. 6:2-3 will be fulfilled; not the outrageous confusion with the judgment of the dead, where are no thrones nor assessors, whatever commentators may dream and say. And so in Matt. 24 the powers of the heavens are shaken, and all tribes of the earth mourn, and the angels gather together His elect (which the context here limits to Israel) from one end of heaven to the other, But all these statements describe a time different from and anterior to the fleeing away of the earth and the heaven when no place will be found for them. They abide in Matt. 24, but not in Rev. 20:11.

The other collocations of scriptural texts in p. 28 have been already shown to be unsound and imaginary, doing violence to scripture at every turn. And all this to blot out the appearing of Christ from Rev. 19:11-21 where it is revealed, and to foist it into Rev. 20:11 where there is no coming described, for the very plain and decisive reason that He will have come already! Nor is it too much to say that, unless Christ come before, it becomes no longer possible thenceforth; for Christ's coming means to this earth whence He ascended (Acts 1). Now before the white-throne judgment the first heaven and the first earth are passed away. As nobody pleads for coming to the new heaven and new earth of eternity, it is demonstrable that He must have come before “the end,” when the elements are dissolved with fervent heat. Christ's coming therefore must be before, not after, the millennium. What avail our notions of difficulty, or facility, or safety (pp. 29-31), against the word of God? Matt. 20 v. 32 at the beginning of the kingdom is in no way inconsistent with Rev. 20:7-10 at the end. The camp of the saints and the beloved city (Jerusalem) may be compassed; but not a saint is hurt, and not a sinner escapes: fire from God out of heaven comes down and devours the bad. Surely if there was affliction for the oppressors, and rest for the oppressed, proved gloriously at the Lord's revelation from heaven (2 Thess. 1:6, 7), there is nothing in that to reconcile with divine judgment falling on the unconverted of the millennium, who had rendered feigned obedience, till at the end the temptation of Satan proves the irremediable evil of man not born of God, in presence of glory then so long familiar, as now in contempt of God's grace.

Nor is there any such strange confusion as adversaries feign. The risen saints reign with Christ over (not “on") the earth; the saints threatened come together as such, consisting of saved Israel and the godly Gentiles. Only the wicked die at that time under God's hand (Isa. 65). On the Holy Mount the Lord had once shown a vision of His power and coming, where on the one hand men appeared in glory, and on the other men in their unchanged bodies, and Christ the head of both. Was not this a little sample of the kingdom that is to be? It does not answer either to this age, or to eternity. Why is it judged incredible with you (alas! in Christendom), if God does what He says? It was, for men who had not tasted of death in this age, a vision of the kingdom of God coming in power, the beautiful and impressive fore-shadowing of that which shall be at the advent, when the glorified shall reign over the earth, and Israel and the nations are here below. It pleased Christ: surely nothing but extreme prejudice, not to say the carnal mind, makes it displeasing to Christians. The kingdom of God comprises “heavenly” as well as “earthly things” (John 3:3; 5; 12); and the sooner this is learned the better for souls.

(To be continued.)

The Second Advent: 2

The N. T. confirms the Old in this fully; but it does more and better. To us it opens heaven and higher hopes, which gradually grew into brightness in the rejected Messiah glorified as man on high, and there made head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. Hence, save for special purposes, it is the heavenly side of the kingdom, on which the O. T. is all but silent, whereas it becomes the prominent and characteristic testimony of the N. T. The earthly side was in no way denied, but rather disappeared in the incalculably superior glory of what has now come fully to view. Yet, painful to say, it is this special privilege for the Christian to enjoy in hope, consequent on Christ's accomplished redemption and the gift of the Spirit, which appears to stumble some of our brethren. For the N. T. says no more than is requisite of the earth by and by: the aim is to insist on heaven in a way and measure which is quite new; and therefore Christ's coming, to receive us to Himself and give us a place with Himself in the Father's house above, becomes the distinctive key-note. But the Christian does not therefore lose his part in the kingdom, though the heavenly hope helps to explain more clearly the exalted relation he is to have in reigning with Christ at that day.

The Father's kingdom will come where the risen saints shine like the sun; and His will be done on earth as in heaven, because the glorious Son of man will hold the reins of power (Satan being bound), and the angels of His might gather out of His kingdom (clearly the earth) all scandals and those that do lawlessness. Then, and then only, are the saints to judge the world, yea, angels (1 Cor. 6), as the apostles sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19). It is a state of things surely to be fulfilled, but as surely neither in this age nor in eternity, but in the age between, when all things, the habitable world to come among them (Heb. 2:5-8), will be seen put under Christ, as they cannot be now or when the kingdom is given up. It is to be feared that those who find it incredible that God's kingdom should consist of earthly and of heavenly things to be displayed together at Christ's manifestation, when we, too, shall be manifested together with Him in glory, fall into the kindred unbelief now of excluding from their hearts and their teaching such unearthly and glorious motives. The apostle counted the letting in of this heavenly light on common matters most desirable, wholesome, and influential. It did not occur to him that real Christians would object to the divine scheme of the kingdom, because Christ will be the displayed Head of all things in heaven and of all things on the earth. The objectors are not indeed Sadducees; but unbelief as far as it goes joins saints in bad companionship. Together they err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

And the consequence of this unbelief has been disastrous from early days to our own. The low chiliastic views of the second and third centuries, which fell back on the Jewish hope of the earth at Christ's coming, were met for the most part by the allegorizing interpretation, which assumed a reign of the gospel and of the church, either already or at a future day. The purpose of God to put the universe heavenly and earthly under Christ was given up by both to the unspeakable loss of the saints, and sad slight of their Lord. Under this error lie our brethren to-day. Even Dr. B., who differs from most of his friends by looking for all Israel's inbringing as a leading feature of the latter

day, nullifies its distinctiveness by his usual argument of less now and more then, so as to assimilate all and deny a new age or dispensation. This vagueness dissolves the power of the truth: else he must feel that the nature of the church as the one body of Christ wherein is neither Jew nor Gentile forbids, and is inconsistent (as long as it is in process of building) with, the inbringing of all Israel. But this he does not see, because he, as much as those who reject Israel's hope, ignores the special calling and character of the church. Now according to scripture it is not the merging of all Israel in the church which is predicted; but, along with their conversion, prophecy points out their restoration to more than pristine glory and blessedness under Messiah and the new covenant; and this, to be the head of the nations on earth, when the glorified reign over it from their heavenly seats with Christ.

When the church ceased to affirm the future prospects of Israel on earth, she along with this lost sight of her own heavenly hopes, and began to seek ease, honor, and power here below, and naturally perverted the prophecies to this end. At length she substituted herself so completely for the ancient people of God, that she dreamed Jerusalem and Zion, Judah and Israel, to be only so many varying expressions of her own glory, either now or at a future day. For another age characterized by Christ's presence and reign was now become intolerable. As long as (alas! how briefly) the church walked in the living. hope of her own heavenly association with Christ's glory, she also confessed God's immutable mercy for Israel here below; that at Christ's coming He might have the glorified with Himself above, and concurrently therewith His earthly people, the channel and means of the universal spread of His name among all nations broken by judgments, and under the Spirit's latter rain, Satan being banished from his wonted haunts.

The prevalent view betrays the usual symptoms of unbelief. It does not face a quantity of plain scriptural testimony. It occupies itself with exaggeration of others or with its own difficulties and objections, not positive truth. It neglects the scriptures which tell us clearly how the kingdom is to come. It is based on the assumption of human progress in the face of the clearest warnings of failure increasing till Christ come. It hides its self-confidence under the plea of the Spirit in and by man working Christ's cause to ultimate triumph. It denies the divine purpose of patting all things visibly under Christ, and the glorified saints on high with Israel and all nations blessed here below before eternity come. It banishes the King from His kingdom, for His bride to enjoy it if she can in His absence, and insists on keeping Satan in his bad eminence, spite of the strongest assurance to the contrary. To what is such obstinate incredulity due? Were the eye single to Christ's personal glory (not “His cause” in our hands), the whole body would be full of light, instead of the confusion this error breeds for this and almost every other truth.

It is false that Christ's second coming “will be at once followed by the final separation of the good and bad, and by the eternal glory” (p. 135), and that consequently the millennium cannot follow it. Our Lord, to correct the thought that the kingdom of God was about to be manifested immediately, spoke parabolically (Luke 19) of going to a distant country (heaven) to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return. His servants (Christians) meanwhile trade with His money; His citizens (the Jews), not content with rejecting Him as they were already doing unto the death of the cross, send a messenger after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. All this (in spite of Peter's call in Acts 3) was punctually fulfilled in the murder of Stephen, sent after Christ as it were with that insulting message. So indeed it was shown in the Acts at large and the N. T. generally. But when Christ comes back again, having received (not given up) the kingdom, He awards to His

servants for the kingdom authority over this or that, and utter loss for such as make no use of what was given; He also executes judgment on the rebellious people. All this will be as surely fulfilled. But it is in no respect the great white-throne judgment for the lake of fire, nor the eternal glory of Rev. 21:1-8, when He shall give up the kingdom to Him Who is God and Father. It is what the apostle had in view when he charged Timothy by (or testified both) Christ's appearing and His kingdom (2 Tim. 4:1); for He is to judge not dead only at the end, but quick at the beginning and in one form or another all through the kingdom. Reigning in righteousness is the characteristic display then; and we shall share His throne.

The post-millennial system misapplies or excludes that grand prospect which the apostle was inspired to open out to us in Eph. 1:10; Phil. 2:10, 11; Col. 1:20. For, though there be results for eternity, the millennium will be the blessed manifestation before the universe of the Savior's triumph. What grace does now is in no way the administration of the fullness of times; nor will eternity be anything of the kind, for Christ shall deliver up the kingdom and Himself be subject to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

The millennium is not a characteristic period of conflict between good and evil, however changed the conditions. It is a reign of righteousness on earth, Christ and His glorified saints reigning together over it. It is the heavenlies, no longer infested by spiritual wickednesses, but purged forever, and filled with those who were once the slaves of Satan, bearing in their risen bodies the image of His glory. It is the heavenly Jerusalem, reflecting from on high, not glory only, but that same spirit of grace (Rev. 22:2) in which those who compose it once walked on earth by faith: the beautiful contrast of the earthly Jerusalem which in that day will still be the witness and instrument of unsparing righteousness (Isa. 60:12). Then more fully will be seen the truth of the great Melchizedek, not only in person and title but in the exercise of His priesthood, when He will bless man with the blessing of the Most High God, pqssessor of heaven and earth; and bless the Most High God Who will have delivered the enemies into the hand of the faithful. Heaven and earth will no more stand severed and opposed through sin; nor will it be merely grace in Christ from heaven shining for all that they may believe, and on believers as, they feebly pursue their pilgrim path; but heaven and earth shall form the harmonious theater of suited glory. “For there are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and that of the terrestrial is another.” “And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith Jehovah, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel” (Hos. 2:21-22).

Eternity is not an “administration” or stewardship, as this will be; nor is it true as a fact yet, but a revealed purpose for that intervening day “to sum (or head) up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth” — “in Him in Whom we also obtained an inheritance,” having been fore-ordained according to His purpose. For we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. During this evil age Satan is the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2), the god of this age, who beguiled its rulers to crucify the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2) This, however, only gave occasion to the mystery concerning Christ and concerning the church. While Christ, sits exalted head over all things at God's right hand, the Holy Spirit is sent down to gather out and together the members of the one body, the sons of glory; so that, when He comes again, having received the kingdom, they too may reign with Him. Then the earth will be judicially cleansed from its defilement, and the

ancient people of God in repentance welcome their once rejected but now glorified Messiah, and thus take their destined place, though on the ground of pure mercy, as the head of all nations and families of the earth, at length blessed under the sway of the only worthy One.

In the eternal universe there will be no more sea (Rev. 21:1). For the millennial state it is written, “Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful before Jehovah; for He cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness. shall He judge the world and the peoples with equity.” It is the kingdom of God before being given up. Then will creation be, not burnt up as at the end, but delivered; for the revelation of the sons of God is come; and as they are no longer waiting for the adoption, the redemption of the body, creation groans no more, but is set free from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of God's. children (Rom. 8). It is the day of the displayed glory of the Second Man, and His manifested triumph over Satan, not the conflict, but the kingdom; and when this (not the strife) draws towards its close, Satan is loosed for a little time, but for a great moral lesson, after which he is overwhelmed and tormented forever. Then only will be the eternal state.

Then will the world, not “believe,” as it ought now, that the Father sent the Son (John 17:21), but “know” that the Father did send Him and love the saints on high as He loved Christ (ver. 23); for will they not then shine in the same heavenly glory? For the glory which the Father gave Christ, Christ gave them (ver. 22), now first said to be “perfected into one,” as indeed cannot be till then. This is the perfection of supernatural interference, the very reverse of “heaven and hell withdrawing from the field, and leaving it to the inherent power of principles as manifested in human life on earth,” as Dr. Edwards erroneously thinks (p. 73).

Dr. Edwards writes for the most part calmly. Yet with an adequate knowledge of scripture one cannot yield to his thoughts or his reasoning.

It is true, as a matter of course, that the advent of the Messiah is first shown in the O. T. (p. 63), and that only after His rejection by the Jews was His second advent discerned clearly from the first. But it is a mistake that the second advent is ever represented in the N. T., as introducing “the eternal reign of God when Christ shall have delivered the mediatorial kingdom to the Father” (p. 64). The age to come is ignored between the end of this age and the eternal day. Nor does scripture leave room for a third advent, which cannot therefore be postulated.

That the end of (not this age, but) the world and the judgment of the dead will be ushered in by an advent of our Lord Jesus, is certainly opposed to the N. T. Rev. 20 is absolutely silent about His advent, because it has been already described in Rev. 19, and what follows consists of its results. There are no quick to be judged after fire from God has devoured the rebellious nations (Rev. 20:7-9); so that the judgment in vers. 11-15 consists solely of the dead, and we may add of the wicked, who, if we believe our Lord in John 5:24, exclusively come into judgment, as these do. They are judged according to their works, which for a sinner is perdition. The books according to the figure employed bore witness of their deeds; the book of life had none of their names. Divine sovereignty was silent; their works confessed the justice of their doom. If Christ must appear to judge quick and dead, it cannot be at the end of the kingdom, because there is no earth to come to, any more than quick to judge. According to the express terms of the vision, earth and heaven will have fled away, and no place be found for them. The dead stand before the throne; but it is neither the earth nor yet the heaven as far as we know, for they are then gone. It is a going of the

dead to be judged by Christ, not in any sense His coming, which is a fabulous interpolation for that time. His true advent for the judgment of the quick is in Rev. 19:11, not in Rev. 20:11, when it is no longer possible, as in fact it is not so written.

As to “inherent improbability” (pp. 65-67), no argument can be more precarious. The nature of the case implies a divine intervention unexampled in the past. The only question for a believer is, What saith the scripture? The first coming of our Lord was no mere link in the chain of the world's history; nor will His second coming be. The one was God's humiliation in Christ's person in grace; the other will be in Him man's exaltation in glory. That both are above “development” is simple to faith, whatever be the speculations of philosophy. The atonement of Christ is not more the answer to a guilty conscience, than it is God thereby glorified even in the face of sin; and the kingdom will be the display of His victory before the universe to the joy of all the once groaning creation, the blessing of long deceived and benighted man, the glorified enjoying the reward of fidelity—in their reign with Christ as they once suffered with Him. Yet Dr. E. asks, “What is gained by a millennium?” and answers, “Apparently, nothing; absolutely nothing.” This is really too dense.

The new age, however necessarily distinct from all before, is a stewardship, an economy. It will have its peculiar object—for Christ to put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. Though He has the title already (Head over all things, which God has put under His feet), He is not yet making good that title against His enemies. While sitting at the right hand of God, and on the Father's throne, He is acting as priest, &c., for His friends, till God makes His enemies His footstool. Then He will come, having received the kingdom, rule in the midst of His enemies, and strike through kings in the day of His wrath. It is a new age marked by its own special principles and ways, wholly distinct from what He or we are doing now, when He is gathering the co-heirs who are associated with Himself in a heavenly way for His reign over the earth at His coming.

Is it not profane to speak of this holy and glorious kingdom of Christ and His own, as wearing the appearance of an immense demonstration, like the triumph of a Caesar? Such a comparison one might understand from the lips of a Festus, who regarded the revelation of God as questions of superstition, and of one Jesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. “It neither grows out of the intellectual and spiritual condition of the human race, nor leads to higher attainments intellectual or spiritual” (p. 66). It is the purpose of God to glorify the Lord Jesus and those who have in faith shared His sufferings, not only as now in Himself on high, but from out of the heavens over the earth, placed as it has never yet been in fact under His scepter.

But Dr. E. should not speak as he does both of the millennial reign, and of the short space that follows: “For a time it burns like a fierce light to be quenched in utter darkness; again, however, to blaze out in. final and unending day” (p. 66). Satan expelled, Israel and all nations blessed, creation delivered, Christ and His own that are changed reigning over the earth, the Most High God possessor of heaven and earth united and in peace, and He Who was erst crucified bearing up the pillars to God's glory: can anything be more worthy of Christ, or more in accordance with God's word? Otherwise a vast deal of scripture in O.T. and N.T. is reduced to a blank, which again obscures both this age and eternity, with which in that case its contents are more or less confounded.

No prospect so desirable both for Christ and for the race. God occupies Himself with the glory of Christ, which will not fail. The millennium is no mistake, but a revealed and splendid chapter in God's story of the universe. In Adam man fell and died; in Christ man will be made alive and blessed. Israel under law became ruined and scattered to every land; under Christ their King, and the new covenant, they will yet be gathered and maintained in peace, and joy, and honor. The nations invested with imperial authority became “beasts,” as Daniel calls them, till the last, in the blasphemous pride of its chief, brings down the Son of man's judgment in His kingdom, when all peoples, nations, and languages shall serve Him. The church, saved by grace, and the responsible witness on earth now to Christ glorified on high, being united to Him by the Holy Spirit, has proved unfaithful and corrupt, as the professing mass will assuredly fall into the apostasy, when the man of sin shall provoke the vengeance of the Lord, no less than the self-exalting civil head; but none the less will Christ present to Himself the church glorious, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and unblemished. Now the millennium will be the “immense demonstration” of all this and more before the world; but as unlike a Caesar's triumph, as a man of dust differs from the Lord of glory. If there were no millennium, what a gap in God's ways and in the display of His counsels!

That the world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ shall come at the close of this age, and last for a long but terminable period constituting the new age, before “the end” or eternity begins, is no difficulty to a true-hearted believer accustomed to bow to scripture, and on his guard against tradition. And the insurrection of the distant nations after the thousand years are over, when Satan is let loose for the last temptation, simply shows that it is an age or dispensation when man is tried under quite new conditions and for the last time. Would the experience of a thousand years of righteousness, peace, and outward blessing, under the glorious reign of Christ and the heavenly saints, endear God to the race as such, so that then they would reject the deceit of Satan?

To this the answer of God's word by the little space is, that the race (however controlled to their own immense advantage, with every mercy around them through the infinitely beneficent and mighty One Who held the reins and shed the blessing) only needs the active temptation of Satan to turn and rebel once more against God. Nothing but to be born of God can avail. They submitted in Satan's absence, when it was their own interest to render such obedience as it was, and when every transgression paid a just. and speedy penalty. There was no temptation; and all was good around, and abundantly too. In such a state they could not be God's people, and He their God, for the new heavens and the new earth. Satan's temptation, unless God must or would convert them all, was precisely the due way to test them, as the race had been, if otherwise, always tested before; and they fall to their ruin at the first trial of Satan, as did man from the beginning. Is it godly, is it intelligent, is it decent, first to blot out the truth of the scriptural millennium, and then to stigmatize its freedom from social conflict, and its “reign in holiness and profound peace for a thousand years,” as a state to which “the actual history of the world is infinitely preferable” (p. 67)? Truly “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

It is ignorance and unbelief to regard the millennium as earthly alone. The distinctive truth is that both heaven and earth will be in blessed nearness of harmony under Christ and the risen saints. And here it may be well to observe that the chief, perhaps only, N. T. semblance of proof for the earth exclusively is the misrendering of Rev. 5:10, where it is painful to see the error of the A. V.

reproduced by the Revisers. For the usage, as far as appears, is that with words of authority or rule ■π■ indicates the sphere ruled over, ■ν the place in which the ruler lived. There is a shade of difference between gen. dat. and accus., but none as to the general fact that, they express the subject of rule, not the ruler's abode. It will be seen, in the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, for instance, that the locality of the king is regularly expressed by ■υ, the sphere by ■π■. This being so, the true rendering is “over,” not “on.” Those who have given the latter have adopted a legitimate force of the preposition generally, not its meaning when modified by the connected βασ. The millennial reign then is heavenly, but over the earthy where Israel and the nations do not reign but are reigned over.

Every one fairly informed on the question knows that the N. T. assumes the O. T. revelation of God on the millennium, but it is almost exclusively on the earthly side. The N. T. is not “more authoritative' (p. 69), but it adds very fully the connection with the heavens under the risen Christ, Heir of all things. Still, while the coming of the Lord is put forward prominently, the kingdom is in no way hidden in the N. T. nor even in the Epistles to the Thessalonians. “The kingdom” implies Christ's coming to reign over the earth. In 1 Thess. 2:12 the apostle speaks of God calling to this, as an encouragement to walking worthily of God; and 2 Thess. 1 shows the enemy had taken advantage of their persecutions and afflictions to say that the day of the Lord was arrived. The apostle, even before he dissipates this delusion, treats their troubles, on the contrary, as a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, “that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which ye also suffer.” It is clearly the millennial reign with Christ which was suggested. And this is the more evident from ver. 10, where it is said that Christ “shall come to be glorified in. His saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believed.” The world will then know by the glory in which Christ and His own shall be manifested, that the Father sent the Son and loved them as He loved Him. This is the millennium, not the eternal scene in the new heaven and new earth.

The next argument of Dr. E. on 2 Thess. 2 (pp. 69, 70), like some of Prof. B.'s, goes against the millennium, whether before or after Christ's return. Now it is quite true, that what the apostle says excludes the millennium before He appears to destroy the lawless one. Here we are cordially agreed. But where is there the shadow of a reason against a subsequent thousand years of peace? More extraordinary still is the next statement: “The impression left on the reader's mind is that Christ's reign is a long conflict with evil, which in the end embodies itself in the person of the lawless one, whose defeat brings the war to a close.” A similar misconception appears in Prof. B.'s paper (p. 28). The impression given by the chapter is that the open outbreak and God-defying pride of the lawless one brings the Lord from heaven to annul him by the shining forth of His presence. This coalesces not only with Rev. 6:11-21, but with Isa. 11:4; both of which are followed beyond controversy by the millennial reign. After that reign is over, Satan is let loose for a special and needed sifting of the unrenewed masses of millennial Gentiles, and judgment falls from God's fire, not from Christ's appearing, without a semblance of the lawless one at that epoch. And no wonder: he had been destroyed irretrievably a thousand years before. Not the lawless one but Satan leads afterward.

On 1 Cor. 15:25 one need say little; for it is agreed that the verse speaks of Christ reigning. But not a word implies that it “has already begun.” The verse does imply that God will have set Christ's enemies as a footstool for His feet to trample down. Is it seriously argued that Christ is actively subduing His enemies now, as He will when the kingdom comes? As to really vanquishing them,

He is quiescent now: all His activities are of grace in converting foes, and nourishing, &c., friends; and this, because the members of His body, the church, are not complete. The marriage of the Lamb takes place in heaven, before He appears in judgment of His open foes (the lawless one first of all), and enters on the reign where all things are to be subjected to Him in fact, as they are now in title. But the reigning is when the dispensed power is in full and public operation before the universe. When that is done, not only in the millennial reign, but by the judgments which precede, and the still more solemn eternal judgment that follows, then the. Son shall also Himself be subjected to Him that subjected all things to Him, the kingdom is surrendered, and God is all in all. So far from there being no hint, there is a pointed reference to the millennial reign in the latter half of ver. 24 and the whole of ver. 25.

(Continued from page 158.)

Chapter 181

The Second Advent: 3

Concluded from page 173

But Dr. E. makes up for such shortcomings by his open admission (pp. 71, 72) that the figurative interpretation of Rev. 20:1-10, for which Dr. Brown and Prof. Beet contend keenly as a question of life or death, “completely breaks down.” Nay more, he “frankly accepts the interpretation that finds in the passage the doctrine of two resurrections, and that a long period, symbolically designated a thousand years, comes between the resurrection of the saints and that of the rest of the dead.” What is there to contend about after such an admission? the plain Christian may ask in surprise. That the millennium is a governmental system, and for a time only, in Christ's hands, is the point. It is not the perfection of the new heaven and earth, when rule is over. “This passage,” adds Dr. E., “contains no hint that Christ comes before the thousand years begin “But St. Paul plainly tells us that the saints are raised at Christ's coming (1 Cor. 15:23). In this respect, that is, in reference to the resurrection of the saints, I infer that the advent is pre-millennial. Beyond this I cannot see that the passage supports the millennial theory.”

It appears to me that a pre-millennialist must be hard to please who cannot see in this admission Dr. E.'s surrender of the post-millennial view; nor can I doubt that his two negative coadjutors must have been scandalized by a confession so distinct and positive, if not complete. To hold that Christ comes from heaven to raise the saints a thousand years and more (symbolically or literally) before He raises the rest of the dead, and yet that He does not then reign, and does not bring in times of restoring all things, though so full of prophetic testimony and therefore of such interest to God and His children, and that the world is not to know the wonders of God's love to Christ and those that were His in days of suffering, and that there is to be no accomplishment of God's purpose for administration of the fullness of times, no heading up of all things in Christ, both heavenly and earthly, in which we are to share the inheritance with Him—to hold what Dr. E. allows, and to deny, as he does, these glorious consequences of Christ's coming, is to present as remarkable a group of inconsistencies as one can expect to see in a man of ability. In this judgment Prof. Beet and Dr. Brown would agree against Dr. E., unless I am greatly mistaken. One can but deplore the violence done thereby to the texture of scripture, and the impotence to which even the truth confessed is thus reduced.

The fact is, however, that our negative brethren are singularly at war with each other on vital questions. Thus Prof. Beet will have it, as the teaching of “very many statements, by various sacred writers,” “that the coming of Christ will forever end the conflict of good and evil” (p. 140). Such is his main position. This is directly at issue with Dr. Edwards, who holds that Christ comes to raise the saints for heaven where they will reign with Him, before the millennium (or a thousand years symbolical before the rest of the dead are raised, Satan being meanwhile bound and cast into the bottomless pit). Yet he also holds that the thousand years, far from being a time of holy peace, are “a continuation of the conflict between good and evil, but under changed conditions.” “Heaven and hell withdraw from the field to leave it to the inherent power of principles, as

manifested in human life on earth” (p. 73). Thus all is avowedly reduced to a human level and order, beyond any dealing of God in the past! “The conflict assumes apparently a more human character!” and this, after confessing Christ come, the saints raised, and Satan bound! Of course Dr. B., as well as Prof. B., wholly reject all these features of Dr. E.'s wonderful millennium. “A more human character” is only true, if the all-important place of the risen Head and the risen saints is owned, not “withdrawn” but from heaven controlling the earth for good, as never before, and ruling the nations with a rod of iron, in contrast with the gospel. The loosing of Satan after the thousand years, and his successful seduction of men far and wide on earth (for he never gains the place of accuser in heaven, as we know him), will only the more bring out that all flesh is grass; for it might have been thought an “inherent improbability” for such as judged from the unbroken peace, righteous government, and visible glory, of that unparalleled period. But flesh ensnared even then by Satan is devoured by fire coming down out of heaven; and heaven and earth are dissolved and vanish away for Christ's judgment of the dead, who are cast into the lake of fire; and new heavens and a new earth appear wherein righteousness dwells, and God (not the exalted Man) is all in all.

For Dr. B. here, and more fully in his S.A., contends for a millennium which only differs from this age by an increase of the good now at work, and a diminution of the evil, with scarce one thing adequately answering to the visions of the kingdom as set forth in both Old and New Testaments alike. Dr. B. indeed does not argue like Prof. Beet, as if the passage in Rev. 20:1-9 stood alone and at issue with every other in the N. T. The chief thing peculiar to that passage in fact is defining the length of the kingdom; and where in the N. T. could that measure be given so fittingly as in its one great prophecy? The kingdom itself is most fully described in the Old Testament, as well as less so in the New. Dr. B. does not question, as Prof. B. seems to do, the sphere of the reign with Christ (pp. 30, 146). They do indeed join arms in throwing doubt over its being a resurrection of the saints. One of them calls it an unproved assertion that the prophet speaks (in ver. 4) of three classes, i.e., of the saints in general, besides the twofold Apocalyptic martyrs; another assumes that they are only martyrs.

In truth Prof. B. leaves it doubtful as far as appears (and I should abhor misjudging him or any other), whether he believes in a millennium at all, save possibly “a fresh departure greater and better even than the Reformation” (pp. 34, 35)! And he widely differs in the hasty assertion that “the visions of Daniel refer always to the eternal glory” (p. 33). Dr. B. on the contrary, with no less confidence, maintains the opposite error that the first vision (and the same principle applies no less to the last) is not even a new dispensation, but only a final step of the same unbroken dispensation as the present (pp. 119-121)! Thus both ignore “the age to come” in flat opposition to scripture. Again, Dr. B., in his aversion to the natural interpretation of Rev. 20:4-6, which Dr. E. admits it is impossible to evade, dwells on the symbolical and difficult nature of the Revelation, with almost every possible interpretation advanced, and the varieties of understanding this very passage among its literal interpreters (pp. 107, 108). Now what matters all this cloud of dust, if he is sure it is inspired, and that the Holy Spirit enables him to understand its genuine meaning? When people are so full of others' uncertainties, can one trust their own assurance? Prof. Beet goes farther still, and does what he can to take up the old skepticism which those who shrunk from Rev. 20:1-10 fell into respecting even its genuineness (pp. 137, 138). But no man ever quarreled with the Apocalypse, unless the Apocalypse gave no quarter to his own idols. There is no book of scripture more self-evidently of God.

As far as appears, Dr. E. symbolizes with the late Prof. Moses Stuart, who believed in a first resurrection literally, and yet adhered to the, traditional view of a general resurrection before the great white throne. But this amalgam is incoherent, and the exegesis unsatisfactory, even to the Andover expositor himself; as every comment must be which is not based on two distinct resurrections, of the just, and of the unjust. A general resurrection, or a universal judgment, is opposed to God's word, and fraught with perplexity and error.

Dr. Brown, after some prefatory words of no concern here, begins with 2 Peter 3:10-13. His fundamental mistake is the assumption that the day of the Lord is the equivalent of the Second Advent. Now any careful reader of the O. T. may see that “that day” includes a vast variety of divine dealings, and is a period, not an epoch. It begins (not with the Lord's presence or coming at all, which is positively and plainly contra-distinguished from it in 2 Thess. 2:1-2, as we have already shown, but) with His judicial dealings on earth; which judgments, in one form or another, occupy the kingdom for more than 1000 years, till it is delivered up at the end. This is the simple truth of the day of the Lord, apart from controversy; and it thus completely disposes of the difficulty. The dissolution of the universe is near the close of that day, but still within it, which is just what the apostle states. Dr. B. perplexes himself by taking for granted that it is at the beginning. His argument in pp. 91-93 is wholly invalid.

The earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up; the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat; but all that the apostle Peter determines is, that it is “in” that day (ver. 10) and by reason of it (ver. 12). It was not to be before, nor yet after, but within, and because of the presence of, the day of God. The Apocalypse of John adds, where alone we ought to expect distinct details in their relative order, that this same destruction of heaven and earth is to be only just before the end. No wonder therefore that those who cling to the post-millennial theory decry the inspired book which demolishes it. The burning up and sweeping away are just before the day ends, which had been running its course for more than a thousand years, an ample period for all that scripture predicts or premillenialists say. Nor is it true that the warning to the scoffers is pointless. If they ask, “Where is the promise of His coming?” the apostle answers with “the day of the Lord” and its overwhelming terrors, which will destroy the ungodly at the beginning, but will not end before the heavens and earth that now are pass away: the fitting and full reply of God to the scornful skepticism which took its stand against His word on the stability of the visible creation. The day will come as a thief, nor will it terminate till every word is accomplished. Dr. B.'s argument cannot survive the touch of scripture.

Just as vain is his reasoning on John 6, and the kindred texts in pp. 94-96. The Lord will assuredly raise up all the dead saints, and change the living ones, to be caught up together in clouds to meet the Lord in the air; but this leaves all open as to any who may be born of God afterward during the day of the Lord, when Messiah's praise shall be of God “in the great congregation,” and “all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kingdoms of the nations shall worship before Thee.” It is absurd to ignore the harvest of the millennial earth, necessarily distinct from the saints who compose the first resurrection. They that are Christ's are to be raised at His coming; but how unreasonable, as well as unscriptural, to fancy that Christ has none to bless in the day of His power and joy! Texts which speak of saints past or present do not shut out the “generation” to come. Psalms and Prophets speak distinctly of saints in that day on the earth. That they die not proves they will not be raised; that they do not suffer with, Christ indicates that they

are not to reign with Him in that day, for they will be reigned over; but as nothing forbids the gracious quickening of the Spirit in that day, so they will have their blessed portion in the eternal state. A premillenialists must be a simpleton to be perplexed by a conclusion as unsound as the premise is negligent of scripture.

In pp. 97, 98 follows a string of texts (Matt. 10:32-33; John 5:28-29; Rom. 2:6-10; Rom. 16: 2 Cor. 5:10) which are cited for simultaneous presentation and judgment of righteous and wicked at Christ's second coming. Not one of them utters a word to that effect. All teach award; none defines the time or way, still less simultaneity. Other scriptures prove that they are wholly apart; one at least defines the long interval. Dr. B. connects verse 16 of Rom. 2 with verse 10 and preceding; whereas it really links with verse 12. Again, Acts 17:31 speaks solely of Christ's judging the habitable earth, and not the dead. It is therefore nothing to Dr. B.'s purpose, but proves a different judgment, which the post-millennial scheme ignores. John 5 is so far from indicating a simultaneous judgment, that it proves the believer's portion to be life, in contrast with judgment which awaits the wicked only; so that there are two contrasted resurrections also. Hence in 2 Cor. 5:10 we read that we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that each may receive the things done through the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad; but not a hint that it will be for just and unjust at the same time, which is elsewhere shown to be unfounded, yea, contradictory of God's word. Dr. B. is loose and unhappy in his citations.

But what then of Rev. 20:11-15, which is supposed to express clearly the absolute universality of the Last Judgment? (p. 99.) Can reasoning be feebler? As in Rev. 11:18, and Rev. 19:5, “the small and the great” include none beyond those that are named, the God-fearing, so in the passage questioned “the great and the small,” do not go beyond the dead that now stand before the throne for judgment, after the blessed and holy we saw raised 1000 years before to reign with Christ. Dr. B.'s argument really upsets his own conclusion. “The great and the small,” as well as the mention of the sea, death, and hades, do solemnly mark the universality of the dead left by the first resurrection; but to seek, as is sought, to include those already raised in “the dead,” who now so long after stand before the throne to be judged, seems as opposed to all just interpretation of the chapter and to all scripture, as it is to all sound reasoning. It can only be accounted for by the darkening influence of error, a πρ■τον ψε■δος.

Everyone must be manifested before Christ's Bema, saints and sinners at their respective and due times: the saints already glorified to give account and receive according to their deeds; sinners, as they have violated conscience, transgressed God's law, or rejected His gospel, to come into judgment, whence none of them can be saved, for they have not life. Hence here it is said (ver. 12) that “the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books according to their works.” If so, it was and could only be everlasting ruin, as inspired David expresses it (Psa. 143:2); and so in the N. T. judgment is contrasted both with life (John 5:24-29) and with salvation (Heb. 9:27-28).

Yet my excellent friend Dr. B., after citing the affecting repetition in verse 13 (“and they were judged every man according to their works”), appeals to “the almost identical language of the Gospels and Epistles already quoted,” which do not treat the judgment of the righteous and wicked as one whole. He asks, Are we to believe that Life's book was opened for no other purpose than to show that not one of those then raised and then judged was to be found in it? The answer is, that

the text expressly declares that the dead, not some but all, ο■ νεκρο■, were not merely “made manifest” as all saints are to be, but “judged” also, as no believer is or can be, if we accept the words of our Lord, “out of the things that were written in the books.” This is inevitable perdition, as every believer saved by grace through the faith of Christ ought to know.

For what then was or could that “other book” be opened, save to make plain that if God's wrath, long revealed and despised, must take its course righteously, God's sovereignty was neither disappointed nor conflicting? The names of the condemned were not there. Therefore it is not “baldly,” but with awful emphasis, added, “And if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.” Not a hint of one who was found written there. The book of life tallied perfectly with the books of deeds. Their works called for God's final punishment; to grace they had been indifferent or actively opposed. I regret that a dear Christian should count it “bald” to believe the divine expression of a most weighty truth—the consistency of sovereign grace with everlasting judgment. And the folly of traditional theology is the more evident; for if the righteous were “nakedly expressed” here or anywhere as sharing the judgment with the wicked, it would contradict the O. T. as well as the New, the Lord no less than the apostle. The error strikes not only at “the most mysterious book of the N. T.,” but at fundamental revelation in general. To say that the believer comes into judgment is at issue with the truth of the gospel itself, and is the mere fruit of reasoning from the assumptions of the natural mind.

It is not true, then, that “the one answer to all this” (p. 101) is the “first resurrection,” though it be irreconcilable with the anti-scriptural dream of a last simultaneous judgment of all. For we have seen thus far that there is not an atom of truth in one argument alleged. Now Dr. B, betakes himself to another venerable and widespread error, that “the persons raised in this first resurrection are the martyrs exclusively” (p. 102). Two classes, he says correctly enough, are here very definitely specified; but how come he and his friends to overlook the general description which precedes, leaving room for all saints beyond those martyrs? “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them,” —exactly fulfilling what the apostle brought before the unspiritual and forgetful Corinthians (1 Coρ 6). Does not Dr. B. know that the saints (not the martyrs exclusively) shall judge the world? Here is the vision of its accomplishment.

We know from 1 Cor. 15, 1 Thess. 4; 2 Thess. 2:1, and many other scriptures, that the saints at large, of O. T. and N. T. alike, are to meet the Lord at His coming, and to be with Him in the Father's house on high. This the Revelation, as being characteristically a judicial book, does not describe on any scheme whatever; but it does disclose the glorified saints above ere this, notably the marriage of the Lamb come and His wife (the church assuredly) as having made herself ready in chap. 19. Others are there entering into the joy of heaven, not in that most intimate relation, yet blessed indeed—they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb (ver. 9), not the bride but the guests. It is not faith nor wisdom to slight, or confound, these distinctions of God's word. And it is but a shuffle to evade them under the pretense that it is a question only of interpretation. Not so. The text is plain, too plain for prejudice; and therefore it must be explained away by misusing Rev 21:2. The bride is not invited to her own wedding; nor are those invited to it the bride. So in Heb. 12:22-24 (where the different objects are marked by κα■, “and,” but neglected in both the Authorized and the Revised Versions), “the church of the first-born,” who are enrolled in heaven, are clearly distinguished from the “spirits of just men made perfect.” It is a false system which merges all saints in one throng; and if the O.T. saints are thus distinguished from the

assembly of first-born ones, how much more the saints in the wholly changed conditions of the age to come! Not seeing this, and bent on denying it, Dr. B. (in his S. A. p. 84) has been betrayed into the stupendous blunder that Heb. 11:40 (“God having provided some better thing concerning us [of the N. T.], that apart from us they [the O. T. saints] should not be made perfect,") means “They without as could not be made perfect, that is, without Christ and the Spirit! whose proper economy ours certainly is.” Such is the result of his desperate effort to escape the plain distinction drawn by inspiration between the saints of the O. T. and those of the New.

Now both compose the general mass of saints, which our brethren overlook, as seen by St. John already occupying thrones in Rev. 20:4, as before seen following Christ out of heaven in Rev. 19:11-14. Compare also Rev. 19:14. When Daniel (Dan. 7:9) beheld the thrones, not “cast down,” but “set up,” he speaks of no sitter but one, the Ancient of days; when John saw thrones, they were filled by sitters on them, and judgment was given to them. The phrase is purposely general, the better to comprise the undefined body of changed saints just issued out of heaven with Christ in order to reign with Him. But as not a few had suffered unto death in the earlier and later persecutions described in the Apocalypse (chaps. 6: 9-11, 13:7, 15), these, who had been slain subsequently to the rest and were not yet raised, are carefully specified as now alive from the dead, both classes of them, to join the general group already enthroned. No doubt this goes far to put out of court the historicalist notion of the Pagan and the Papal periods; but this is a secondary question of application which may be left to the speculative. Our business now is the true exposition of the text before us; and there is no intelligible ground in its plain terms for doubting that there is first, in the opening clause of verse 4, the general body of those who have part in the first resurrection; then the earlier class of Apocalyptic martyrs; and lastly the later company, for which the earlier were to wait. The last sufferers having been killed even as those before, the two specified classes are now raised in time to join the great bulk of the glorified who had already been seen on the thrones, so that they all might reign with Christ a thousand years. Who can fail to see that this is the clear and sure meaning when attention is once fairly drawn to the passage? It was unnecessary to define who filled the thrones (p. 146); for it could not but be the saints answering to the bride and the guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb, who had followed Him out of heaven for His judgment and reign over the earth.

These form the first and general class; to which both groups of Apocalyptic sufferers were added when raised, as the prophet was given to see. Dr. B. at least expressly admits the two “very definitely specified” classes of martyrs, though he, like many others, has not taken account of the already enthroned saints. It is idle to dispute that the verse reveals the general body, with two classes added of special interest in the Apocalypse. It is negligence or prejudice which accounts for the strange oversight of the general clause. What does it matter if the Fathers saw not the wood of that clause in their hasty pre-occupation with the trees in the subjoined clauses? What avails parading moderns, whose exegesis was not “strict,” but really fanciful in the extreme, or vague and lifeless? There the word of God stands, the test of all interpretation. Disprove what is here given, if mistaken. Let objectors give the exact sense without ignoring its most important introduction.

Dr. E. is right, Dr. B. quite wrong, as to Rev. 20:4-6, which, only if taken literally, corresponds with Rev. 1:6; Rev. 2:10, 11, 26 & 27; Rev. 3:21; Rev. 5:10; as it is the sole adequate recompence for such suffering as we see in Rev. 6:9-11, &c. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him;” not His

“cause” merely having the upper hand in other persons without Him, but ourselves reigning gloriously with Him.

And here let us observe how unjust is the slight put on the Revelation, as not having equal authority with other books of scripture. Is it to be justly blamed because its expositors have so differed one from another? There can be no sliding scale among inspired writings. If it be, as the apostle John declares, what the Lord Jesus gave him from God, woe be to the man who contemns it in comparison with other books. As with St. Paul's letters, there are things in the Apocalypse hard to be understood; but the amount is excessively overrated. The first five chapters are as plain as most parts of the N. T. So are chaps. 7, 10, and even 12-15; chaps. 17-22 are so for the most part. Only chaps. 6, 8, 9, 11, 16, present serious difficulty in some respects; yet even in these will be found unquestionably edifying matter for souls.

In fact, then, Rev. 20:4 is a comprehensive sketch of the saints risen to reign with Christ. Its peculiarity is, not only that it defines the duration of that reign over the earth before “the end,” but that it specifies two added classes of sufferers slain in the crisis which precedes the day of the Lord. Without this vision it could be but dimly seen how those specified would fare; though one might be sure on first principles that all must be well with them. For they were not put to death till after those symbolized by the twenty-four crowned elders were in heavenly glory; and their slaughter did not cease while the Beast and the False Prophet lived to kill them. Thus they did not survive to enjoy the blessings of Christ's reign over the earth. But by dying for His sake, even so late, they gained immensely, instead of losing; for they too, as the vision declares, live and reign with Christ, no less than all that were His raised previously and already seated on thrones. To gainsay this, and on the score of “legitimate principles of interpretation” (pp. 108, 109), where the main entry is omitted, and only the two added items are taken into reckoning, is carelessness and self-deception as gross, at least, as if one, in describing the British Empire; dwelt only on Scotland and Ireland, and forgot there was such a part of it as England and Wales.

It is well-known that the post-apostolic Fathers till Origen were millenarians. The remains of some, and the writings of others, bear ample testimony to the early and prevalent conviction of a literal resurrection of the saints, and their reign with Christ for a thousand years. But these ante-Nicene views were but partially true at best, to say nothing of Talmudical reveries that crept in here or there. They looked for a reign and living of the glorified on the earth. They never rose to the height of God's purpose for Christ's glory in the universe. They entered not into the N. T. light in 1 Cor. 15, Eph. 1, and Heb. 2, cast on Psa. 8: the risen Son of man at the head of all creation, not Palestine only nor yet the earth, but “all things that are in the heavens and on the earth;” and the saints till then changed into His glorious likeness at His coming, and associated with Him, the heavenly bride of the Bridegroom. Like their adversaries that followed, they mixed up the hope with the prophetic word; so that dreaded times or expected seasons intercepted the heart's waiting for Christ, and lowered their eyes from heaven to earth.

Then the ruin of the church's testimony grew apace. Origen spread widely his allegorizing system, Dionysius of Alexandria his dialectic, Eusebius of Caesarea his flattery of the powers that then were. At length the influence of Augustine established all but universally in Christendom the so-called spiritual theory, that the first resurrection means regeneration in virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, and that the baptized, if at least God's elect, are reigning with Christ ever since

He ascended to heaven!! This truly “wild” interpretation not only prevailed before the Reformation, but keeps its ground since among Romanists, as among many of the Protestants who still hold it, save where the yet lower ecclesiastical theory of Grotius proved acceptable, till the Arian Dr. Whitby broached, early in the eighteenth century, his discovery—to spread like wild fire—of a future reign of Christ's cause on earth, gradually brought about by divine blessing on Christian agencies, but helped on by providential dealings also.

Of the Whitbyite hypothesis Vitringa, though striving to trace a foreign source, was the learned advocate, as Dr. B. is the chief popularizer and warm special pleader in our day. More plausible in one respect than the Augustinian fancy, it undermines and supplants the revealed hope even more fatally, falls in readily with the delusion of human progress, and thus corrupts the faith with an expectation essentially worldly and carnal. In particular, the Grotian idea of an ecclesiastical reign since Constantine left men free to conceive, as did the late Bp. Waldegrave and many other brethren, that the millennium is past, and the little space ebbing out; so that they could look for Christ's coming without one revealed event between. For all these speculators had alike fallen into the error of identifying His advent with “the end” or the judgment of the Great White Throne. So men like the admirable S. Rutherford or Bp. Hall might be dark indeed as to prophecy; but the hope for them was not so paralyzed, as it became half a century or more afterward by Whitbyism, which suits perfectly the unbounded self-confidence of the revolutionary liberal movement, the characteristic of the last hundred years. Scripture, on the contrary, assures of declension and apostasy, the mystery of lawlessness, and the lawless one revealed, whom the Lord Jesus destroys at His appearing—the distinct reversal of the Whitbyite expectation, which glorifies present instrumentalities and robs Christ personally of His honor, as it leaves Satan in possession, however reduced.

Take a sample or two of its effects manifest in the essays before us, as everywhere else in this school. They all object to what is said to be revealed but once: an irreverent unbelieving notion worthy of all detestation as applied to God's word, nay, unworthy even of honorable men. “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater,” says the beloved. disciple. “Know ye not,” says the Apostle Paul, “that we shall judge angels?” (1 Cor. 6:3.) Now this follows the question in ver. 2, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” —the same truth, which reappears explicitly in Rev. 20:4-6, as it had with less detail appeared in Dan. 7:18. But if it had been true that the reign of the saints with Christ had been revealed only once, is our judging angels the less credible or important, because we here have it in this single passage Christ's surrender of the kingdom to the Father is notified only in 1 Cor. 15:24. Is it therefore of dubious import or of insignificant value? Is it not a truth of the utmost consequence, because it draws the line (un-divulged in the O. T.) between the millennial reign and eternity? Without it one could not decide, as Prof. Beet and Principal Brown do not yet, the just force of the O. T. prophecies in general, and of not a few in the N. T. Hence it is idle on this ground to object to the stoppage of Satan's temptations for a thousand years, or to the revolt he stirs up in the little space that follows. Their argument at bottom is blind unbelief, sure only to err, and lead astray all who lean on that broken reed of Egypt.

Again, it is argued in this hazy system that the beginning of the millennium may be as uncertain as the starting-point of the seventy weeks. Now where is the analogy? On the one hand it is a question mainly between the seventh or the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, and two

commandments not a little resembling. On the other hand, the most tremendous judgments will fall first on the western powers in confederation with the Jews and their king, followed by the destruction of the eastern under their great northern chief, with carnage beyond example in both cases: events which close this age, and open the age to come, or millennial reign. Is it wise to set the easily understood vagueness of one ancient imperial mandate, out of two not unlike, against a crisis of unexampled solemnity and horror, to say nothing of Christ's appearing, or of the universal peace and blessing that ensues without an enemy or an evil occurrent? The effort to find gradual and successive steps in Dan. 2:44; 7:26, and 2 Thess. 2:8 is unworthy of sound philology, and contradicts the plain objects of the three texts, which describe nothing else or less than a sudden and complete extinction. Consuming in a slow sort and by evangelical means is precluded by the least approach to exact criticism as well as by a spiritual judgment.

But it is pleaded that the Whitbyite view is strengthened by the frank concession that the thing seen in the vision of Rev. 20:4 was a literal resurrection (pp. 109-111); and that Rev. 11:3-12, as well as Ezek. 37, &c., help the figurative force (pp. 112-115). I must reject Dr. B.'s historical application of the Two Witnesses as the full adequate sense for the crisis when every word is to be fulfilled. Probably Prof. B. and Dr. E. accept it no more than I do. Then the prodigal son in Luke was dead spiritually, and so made alive. Dr. B. himself admits that this is not the force of our text. So again in Rom. 11, If Israel's casting away be the world's reconciliation, what shall be their reception but life from the dead? Resurrection is the figure, not the explanation as in Rev. 20. Further, Dr. B. admits the reference to Rev. 6:9-11, where undeniably literal death is meant. How then can he escape the inevitable conclusion that here those literally slain are literally raised to life? Surely in all this argument logic and exegesis are equally at fault.

As the Two Witnesses are too questionable to afford a sure test, let us try the Jewish prophecy. Ezekiel was given to see a multitude of dry bones come together, acquiring flesh and sinew and breath, so that they stood on their feet an exceeding great army. This revival is the figure, of which the explanation follows, “These bones are the whole house of Israel,” who were to be placed in their own land (Ezek. 37:11-14). John saw thrones with persons seated on them; and then two classes of disembodied souls who had been slain for Christ, or in refusal of the beast, and were now caused to live that they too might reign with Christ. This is the Apocalyptic vision, of which the explanation is, “This is the first resurrection” (Rev. 20:5). Plainly therefore, in all accuracy of exegesis, the cases are in contrast; for in the Jewish prophet resurrection is the vision, in the Christian prophet resurrection is the declared meaning of the vision. Figures are in no way denied, nor yet symbols. The question is as to the meaning of the vision here, and the revealed answer is, This is the first resurrection.

The context demands the literal sense. Dr. E. confesses it here. Dr. B. resists it in vers. 4-6, while a little lower (vers. 12, 13) he cannot but allow it. Is this spiritual? or reasonable? or consistent? In the same short context two resurrections are predicted, with nothing but blessedness affixed to the first, with nothing but judgment and the lake of fire attached to the second. Yet, according to this shifty invention of Dr. Whitby (as poor a commentator as he was a contemptible critic, to say nothing of his fundamental heterodoxy), the first is to be figurative, the second beyond doubt literal notwithstanding the design and character of this ambiguous and debateable book! Such principles of criticism, such exegetical practice, who can consider but as illegitimate in the extreme? For surely in two visions of the same context, successively balanced against each other with the

respective key-words, This is the first resurrection, and, This is the second death, they should be, in all consistency, either both literal or both figurative. As even the allegorist is obliged to admit that the second is literal, we insist that so ought to be the first: else the chapter is not fairly dealt with. No book could be intelligibly interpreted on a plan so arbitrary. It is not the book which is censurable, but its interpreters, of whom the Whitby school is perhaps the lowest.

To obviate the pressure Dr. B. asks for the literal sense of ver. 5, “The rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years should be finished.” But, instead of waiting for an answer from a neighbor capable of searching him, he insinuates a reply which simply proves his own bewilderment: “Is it a set of men rising literally from the dead? Why, in the place of this, we find them to be a cloud of mortal men in the flesh, enemies of Christ and His cause,” &c. (p. 115). Now the true answer is, that the prophet saw that the rest of the dead did live, and that the most incredulous of believers admit that so it is, in vers. 12, 13. The insurrection of vers. 7-10 is never called a resurrection. In vain is it objected that there was “a little time” more in the account. For the “till” in no way negatives an added space after the thousand years; it denies the rising of the rest of the dead before that. The attempt to substitute the insurrection of Gog and Magog for the resurrection which the prophet only saw afterward (the sole possible reference that is not fraudulent), is a too evident diversion to prop up the tottering mythical interpretation of vers. 4-6. This may be truly designated as “distortion” wholesale (p. 116); whereas not a word is distorted in either vision, when both are interpreted literally. The one is a resurrection of life, as the other is of judgment; and thus the Revelation perfectly harmonizes with the Gospel of John. If we believe the Lord in both, a “catholic” or simultaneous resurrection is a mere figment, which scripture discountenances and dispels.

Dr. B. does not put forward here, but he does strongly maintain, in a useful book devoted to it, the restoration of the Jews, once more and forever blessed nationally in the Holy Land. His error is in assuming that it will be under the gospel, instead of for the kingdom in the new age. For it is a matter of apostolic doctrine, with which the O. T. of course agrees, that “as touching the gospel they (the Jews) are enemies for our (Gentiles') sake; but as touching the election they are beloved for the fathers' sake” (Rom. 11:28). They stumbled at the Stumbling-stone—a humbled, rejected, suffering, and crucified Messiah. Therefore are they, scorning the gospel, themselves rejected. During their eclipse Gentiles are called by the gospel, and the believers (Jew or Gentile) are united to Christ the heavenly Head by the Holy Spirit sent down. When this new dealing of God is complete (wherein Jewish and Gentile distinctions vanish, and Christ is all), and we go to meet Christ in the air, divine mercy begins afresh to work in Israel, fitting them to be His earthly people, the leader of the nations under the Lord's reign. Thus are God's gifts and calling shown to be unrepented of. Now blindness in part has befallen Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. By-and-by all Israel shall be saved, but this only when there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, Who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. It is the kingdom, not the gospel as now.

It is deeply interesting to compare in Rom. 3 the quotations of Psa. 53, and of Isa. 59, not only with the connection in these chapters, but with the citation of Isa. 59 in Rom. 11. Nor does it bear slightly on the question before us. It proves a total change between God's ways under the gospel as now, and under Messiah at His coming again.

In Rom. 3 the apostle quotes the psalm and the prophet to prove the Jew shut up under sin, no less than the Gentile about whom the Jew at least had no doubt. But, says the apostle, the law, of which you boast as yours only, speaks of you Jews, and condemns you explicitly and utterly; so those two witnesses (which might have been multiplied) conclusively declare it, “that every mouth may be stopped and all the world be under God's judgment.” What follows meanwhile? The gospel of God's grace, whilst Christ is away, glorified in heaven, consequent on His death on the cross. This accordingly is pursued, instead of the conclusion of the psalm, or of the prophecy; which say not a word about the grace which now flows out without respect of persons to Jew and Gentle. They point only to the future when the salvation of Israel is to come out of Zion, God bringing back the captivity of His people, and the Redeemer Himself coming to Zion. The apostle in Rom. 3, says nothing of Israel's hope, because this is not the gospel; it dwells only on the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God set forth a propitiatory or mercy-seat through faith in His blood.

But in Rom. 11 he is proving that the present rejection of the Jew, which makes room for the indiscriminate grace of the gospel, is not to last always. For the Gentile, if he continue not in God's goodness, will surely be cut off; as the ancient people, if they continue not in their unbelief, will as surely be grafted in. And this he proceeds to show as a prediction from the same Isa. 59 All Israel (not Jews only) shall be saved. But it is, on the one hand, when the fullness of the Gentiles is come in; and on the other, when there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer: two facts most momentous, which indicate the present age at an end, and the new one come. It will be the kingdom when Israel are to be saved; as it is the gospel which gathers out the Gentiles in a mercy which ignores the national and peculiar privileges of Israel. God's covenant to take away Israel's sins only takes effect when Christ, comes to and out of Zion.

Dr. B.'s contention is really with the Apostle Paul. Is not this an immense change in God's methods? A heavenly people cannot consist with an earthly one, both owned here below at the same time. The national restoration of Israel is incompatible concurrently with the indiscriminate grace of the gospel which blots out all natural differences in those who compose Christ's body for heaven. The coming of Christ closes the heavenly purpose, and introduces in due time the earthly plans of God, Christ being the center of both. The Father's name is developed in the former, as in the latter the name of Jehovah, the Almighty God; the Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth. These blessed counsels and ways. of God in Christ for His glory are blurred or effaced by the post-millennial scheme.

Of the appeal to missionary feeling in pp. 116-120, and the closing words, little more is needed, as it has been sufficiently met already. It is sweet to find in a single verse of Rev. 22 the adequate safeguard. “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take life's water freely.” Here we have the heavenly hope absolutely apart from, and thus unfettered by, the visions of coming judgments, providential or personal. St. John at the close is as fresh in living hope, as Paul at the beginning. They at least were God-informed followers of Christ, if the Thessalonians were alarmed by the false cry that the day of the Lord—in some figurative sense probably—was come. There is no mistake in any part of scripture. The Lord bade His servants stand, as it were, behind the door, that when He came and knocked, they might open to Him immediately. Watching for Him is higher and nearer His heart than working, though blessed are both; and best of all, when watching for Christ imprints ever a heavenly character on serving Him.

It was no question of less or better informed followers. The church was to say, Come; ay, and not the church only (for even she might, and did, err), but “the Spirit and the bride say, Come.” It was the body of Christ, warranted, guided, and sustained, at the last point to which revelation leads us. The enemy would strive to divert them from the constant waiting for Christ's presence; he might seek to shake by dread of the day, or by the great tribulation; or he might seek to interpose the improvement of the world or a millennium of Christ's cause. But no! “The Spirit and the bride say, Come.” And so was the individual to say who had only heard Christ's voice, ill-informed perhaps about prophecy, the church, or aught else. Still this is the individual hope too: “He that heareth, let him say, Come.”

Then do we find the other side. Our first and best affections are, and ought to be, for Christ our hope. But Christ gives us while waiting for Him to share divine love toward perishing souls; and therefore we can turn round to a lost world and take up the good news, “He that is athirst, let him come:” yea, more, “He that will, let him take life's water freely.” This is the gospel in all its free grace, and in its due place; but it is subordinate to Christ and the hope of Christ, if indeed we are subject to God's word.

(Concluded from page 173.)

Chapter 182

The Secret of God: Part 1

“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant” (Psa. 25:14).

Among other means by which the word of God, the only standard of truth, has been effectually hindered by man, in the office assigned to it by God, one has been the habit of generalizing God's truth and presenting to the mind certain propositions, as if they contained the whole of His revealed will. Hence has arisen a great impatience of searching the scriptures. We presume very soon that we are in possession of all necessary truth which the word of God contains, because we confine all necessary truth to that which respects individual salvation; and we revere the Bible, rather because it administers to our necessities as fallen sinners, than because it reveals God and His glory. It is for this reason that we find so many real Christians in deplorable ignorance of the word; it has not been searched into as containing, in every part of its revelation, some object of faith or hope, intended to be morally influential upon their souls. They have not sought to it as those whose privilege it is to be interested in all the counsels of their heavenly Father; and they have often read it as if all the truths contained in it were necessarily to be comprehended under those which have occupied their own minds.

It is indeed very sorrowful to witness how often the most important conclusions are attempted to be supported by scripture, wrested from its context in the most violent manner, so that a threatening of judgment is sometimes produced as a promise of mercy. It is not my object to expose this, but to point out two evils which have resulted from it: 1st.—the inability in most Christians, of meeting error which Satan always mingles with much truth, from their being “unskillful in the word of righteousness;” 2nd.—that our present very low state in a great measure arises from the want of that definite apprehension of the glory of our calling, which the word of God presents to our view. In fact whilst, in the language of ordinary life, most words convey to the mind some distinct idea, those of scripture are held so vaguely and loosely, as often to convey no real meaning at all. It is thus that Satan has fearfully succeeded in lulling men into security, when the most express declarations of God fail of touching the conscience, even in His own people. It is thus that the great and fearful crisis is hastening on “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of truth, that they might be saved: and for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in un righteousness.”

It is by the word, through the Spirit, that we can alone become acquainted with, or established, in the truth. And as God has “magnified His word, above all His name,” and called it “the sword of the Spirit” (Psa. 138:2), it is in implicit subjection to that authority, that I would attempt to develop that secret which was in the mind of God from all eternity; which was first in His mind, and of which He gave the earliest typical intimation, but which was not made known till after the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, Who leadeth into all truth. It is nothing less than “all truth” which is our portion. God is light, the brightness of His glory

has been expressed to us in Jesus; there remains nothing more of revelation by the word, although nearly everything of actual manifestation is yet to be.

Moses truly was commissioned to declare much, but yet he knew he had not declared all, there were secrets in the divine mind which himself and others of the worthies, holy men of old, “desired to see and saw not, and to hear and heard not “; but it was the prophet like unto Moses that was to be received, as he into whose mouth God would put His words, that he might speak unto them all that He should command. He alone was able to declare God (John 1:18). Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Hence the difference of the language of Moses and Paul. The former, led to look into a long vista in the fortunes of His people, lost in the contemplation of the fearful judgment coming upon them, says, “the secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children” (Deut. 29:29). But that which He had kept secret from Moses, He had revealed by His Spirit unto Paul, “for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God.” “I would not brethren that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved” (Rom. 11:25-26). Moses was indeed taught that His people which had corrupted themselves, would be brought into a condition of such estrangement from God, “that He would move them to jealousy with those which are not a people, that He would provoke them to anger with a foolish nation” (Deut. 32:21). The Holy Ghost, by Paul, shows the purpose of God in their temporary rejection; even that by their fall might be “the riches of the world “; by their diminishing “the riches of the Gentiles “; by their casting away “the reconciling of the world “; in other words, the introduction of that dispensation of marvelous grace under which we are. True it is that both its grace and glory are little considered by us “sinners of the Gentiles.” In order to see either distinctly, we must place ourselves in the situation of the favored people of God; we must judge through their reasonable prejudices instead of our own fearful high-mindedness and self-complacency. The introduction of “the eternal purpose of God,” even the making known unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, was an event for which the minds of God's people were not prepared. It was a something entirely new as to revelation, although first of all in the mind of God: it had been figured in Eden, in the giving to Adam, for a help meet for him, the woman taken from his side whilst he slept; “this is a (or the) great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and His church.” This great mystery was very gradually unfolded indeed. The personal ministry of the Lord was with very few exceptions; confined to Israel, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But His ministry to them was chiefly in testimony against evil, and, all the while He was testifying unto them as the sent of God and last witness to them, He treated the nation as apostate, and frequently intimated the change in dispensation which was about to be introduced.

Among the first notices of this, we may remark the sermon on the Mount; every line of which went against a strictly Jewish feeling. I mean the feeling of one who considered himself as under the law, and therefore that law (i.e., the assertion of right) was the rule between Himself and others. Law, properly speaking, knows nothing of mercy; the assertor of it must necessarily take the place of one who has not swerved from the rule of right himself, and therefore with others who have transgressed that rule has the title to deal in the way of retributive justice. “The people were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them as one having authority.” It was His own authority as the Lawgiver, set against that which was said to them of old. And unless even now we see

distinctly, how completely the genius of the present dispensation is diverse from the former, we are necessitated to charge God foolishly, and to set God speaking by Moses against God speaking by His Son; or to do that which is now so commonly done, to confound and therefore to neutralize both. The principle is “the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law” (Heb. 7:12). So now, the kingdom being changed from an earthly to a heavenly one, the law is of necessity changed also. Whilst God dealt with a people under a dispensation of righteousness of law, it is plain that their earthly blessing (and the law as given by Moses knew no other) depended on their obedience to it, “for he who despised it died without mercy:” this was the tenure of their blessing, “if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people, for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation". Whilst this was the case, God made His own principle of conduct applicable to His people. He was dealing with them ostensibly in law, and therefore He sanctioned that same principle, even law as between man and man. But when God changed His principle of dealing with man from law to grace, then was a new principle of man's conduct to man necessarily introduced also. “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ “; and He by whom grace came could say, not as disannulling or falsifying what went before (for surely not one jot or tittle shall pass away, till all be fulfilled), but as introducing the great mystery of the grace of God, “It was said to them of old, but I say unto you.” Our calling is not now to prospective blessing, or continuance of blessing under conditions performed. “But God hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace; which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” And therefore our conduct to others must be regulated by the principle of God's conduct to us. The principle of God's own kingdom, even the kingdom of heaven, which is grace, is the only one allowed to the children of the kingdom. So that which might be right and fitting to those of old, would be wrong and sinful in a disciple of Him Who only is to be called Master. Hence we discover the reason why Christians so naturally cling to law as their principle of action, since it allows their dealing towards others on a principle which went to secure earthly blessing, whilst grace applies only to heavenly.

The next notice of this in the Lord's ministry is that remarkable one in the case of the centurion—“Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel; and I say unto you, Many shall come from the east and the west and sit down with Abraham, &c., in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness.” Again the surprising statement the Lord made respecting John, His own forerunner, (filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb, greater than any born of women,) that the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he, closing with the solemn warning, “He that hath ears to ear let him hear.” It was a plain intimation of the introduction of something widely different from that in which they stood. The declaration of the blessing that rested upon them (Matt. 13:6)—because that unto them “it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,” which was not made known to others—was a succeeding step in leading their expectations onward. A subsequent mark of approval of the faith of any Gentile (Matt. 15:22-28) on an occasion which most significantly marked the transfer of that which the children despised and loathed, to others who would gladly receive it, must have raised in their minds the question, “Is He the God of the Jews only?” Is He not also of the Gentiles?

These and many such like kinds tended to prepare their minds for that which they could not then bear, because the groundwork on which it was based—His own sufferings and death—was at that time only prophetically stated, and had not actually taken place. It was when the Gentiles came to inquire concerning Him (John 12:21) that Jesus Himself says, “The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified;” —and then “I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all unto Me; this He said signifying what death He should die.” So long as he was personally ministering on earth, He would be only exposed to rejection. Now the Messiah on the earth was strictly and properly the Jewish expectation. But here is one very different held up to them. The Son of Man must be lifted up! but who is this Son of Man? It was the complete subversion of every fondly cherished hope on their part, as Jews, but it is the only ground of blessing to us as Gentiles. It is in the cross that God is shown as no respecter of persons. The cross is the attractive point to all, because all are brought in guilty before God, both Jew and Gentile. The introduction of this dispensation of grace is on the avowed principle of the universal ruin of the human race. Moral qualification is out of the question: “There is no difference, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

Take the highest supposed qualification, natural or moral, the principle of grace is nullified, if it is attempted to approach God otherwise than as lost: and the lowest comes in on the same plea. God, by the cross, has set aside the barrier (of His own erecting) of access to Him. “And the law is not of faith, but the man that doeth them shall live by them.” “Christ hath redeemed us (Jews) from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we (Jews) might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” The difficulty in the mind of the Jew, was, Did not their rejection implicate the faithfulness of God? was not the word of God made of none effect? Not in any wise; the Messiah, as concerning the flesh was theirs. He fulfilled in His person and work, all His Jewish responsibilities. “He died for that nation.” He underwent the curse of the law for them, but not for that nation only, but that He also should gather together in one (even in the cross) the children of God that were scattered abroad. Here is the Gentile dispensation; but let not the Gentile deny the proper Jewish expectation, and the work of Christ for them, pre-eminently as the Redeemer of their forfeited possession, lest he invalidate the faithfulness of God which is the alone security for his own blessing. Faith “sets to its seal that God is true “; but if God fulfills not His earthly promises to the literal Israel in Messiah, then the gifts and callings of God can be repented of. In fact God's dealing with the Jew, is the great outward palpable demonstration of His sovereignty and of His election.

Chapter 183

The Secret of God: Part 2

(Continued from page 195.)

The commission given to the apostles before His death is widely different from that after His resurrection. “Go not into the way of the Gentiles (nations); and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But when all the power in heaven and earth was given to Him, then the commission takes in the universal range, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations.” It was no longer matter of testimony to Israel only. Jesus was made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises of God unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; it was now grace to sinners. But this large commission was not then acted on. Even after His resurrection, those who were conversant with Him during His sojourn on earth, “to whom He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,” even then their minds were only opened to a Jewish hope. “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” This was their proper hope as Israelites, that all the promises of earthly glory should be made good to Israel in the resurrection of Messiah. The everlasting covenant, “even the sure mercies of David,” was secured by the resurrection, as the apostle testifies; and as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, “I will give you the sure mercies of David” (Acts 13:34). He had now shown His power over death and the world; and so far as earthly glory was concerned, it might then have been asserted. In order to that there was no need for Jesus to have ascended into heaven. He could have called forth Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, from their graves, and made good the promises of God to them, in faith of which they had died.

In their expectation the disciples were not wrong; but they had not yet entered into the intermediate dispensation— “the hidden mystery” of God. They had forgotten that it was expedient for them that He should go away; for all power in heaven as well as earth was given to Him, and thus was to be proved by His ascension. Not even on the descent of the Holy Ghost, (although they were “endued with power from on high,” and were thus brought into the understanding of the mystery of the kingdom of heaven, in their own personal experience of union with the risen Jesus, as Man having all power in heaven as well as earth) were they led to the discovery “that the Gentiles were fellow-heirs with them in this.” In order to this, a fresh revelation was needed; another “opening of heaven,” and direct communication to him who had had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and had opened it to the Jews (Acts 2), now likewise to open it to the Gentiles. The vision recorded in Acts 10 is the display of God's cleansing, in a sovereign manner, and taking up into heaven that which Peter called unclean. “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.” And this was his vindication for going unto the Gentiles. “Forasmuch as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God” (Acts 11:17.) “The mystery of godliness,” therefore, in this part at least, was now clearly revealed, “preached unto the Gentiles.”

But the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles (Col. 1:27) was not yet fully developed. For this another agent was specially raised up, not merely as the witness of resurrection life, but of ascension glory—even the apostle of the Gentiles. He received no commission from Jesus on the earth, but from Jesus “received up in glory.” The thing to which he was specially to witness was the glory to which Christ was exalted, and unto which the saints quickened by the Spirit were also called. The other apostles “bear witness because they had been with Him from the beginning” (John 14:27). “Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one [be ordained to] be a witness with us of His resurrection.” They were witnesses to the fact of the resurrection of Jesus. But Paul was witness to something beyond this fact. “The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of His mouth; for thou shalt be His witness of what thou hast seen and heard” (Acts 22:11, 15). And when he would assert the authority of his commission in the strongest way, he notices its distinction from that of the others:Paul an apostle (not of men, nor by man, but) by Jesus Christ and God the Father Who raised Him from the dead. It was Jesus Who appeared when in the way; and there shone around about him “a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun,” so that he fell to the earth. Peter, James, and John were eye-witnesses of His majesty at the transfiguration; but Paul, as subsequently John, of His majesty after His ascension. This was what he had seen, and of which he was to witness, according to the word of the Lord, Who raised him from the earth to which he had fallen. “Rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee” (Acts 26:16).

“Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.” God has never adopted any remedies, but His works have been all arranged according to the counsel of His own wisdom. True, His works may appear to our short-sightedness remedial, because He will show that His purpose alone can stand by the failure of the creature tinder the highest possible advantages. But there is a fullness of time for the development of that which is in His mind, and His own eternal counsel is the last manifestation. All the blessing and glory was planned and secured in Christ Jesus before the world began. First of all, earthly blessing fails, and then those who are outwardly called into the kingdom of heaven fail; but in the end the stability of both in Christ Jesus is to be shown. Hence the apostle speaks of himself and others, “Let a man so account of as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God;” not the one without the other; not simply preachers of the gospel, but those who would be able to set forth the bearing of God's dispensations.

It is remarkable how men may be misguided by a word. It is a just rule that the meaning of a word is not to be judged of by its currency at any time, but by the sense in which the writer used it. Now the word “mystery” conveys to our natural minds an idea quite distinct from that in which the Spirit of God uses it. The mysteries of God are not the secrets known in His own breast, but His secrets disclosed. What was known unto Him before the foundation of the world is now made known to us. For example, it was a secret in God's own bosom, from the beginning of the world, that all His earthly arrangements were made in reference to Israel. But that purpose was revealed to and by Moses. “When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons

of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. xxxii. 8). True, such a statement may appear mysterious to the world, in the popular sense; but to faith it is the announcement of a wonderful fact, involving the whole history of the world. True, most trim, that there are mysteries in God (for we know but in part); but it is not with these that we have to do, but with those which He has revealed. Because so few have been faithful stewards of the mysteries of God, does the church lie in the state in which it is, having confounded things that differ; and, instead of being guided into all truth, is quite content to think that a single truth is enough for it to know, and that all God's truth is necessarily crowded into that which ministers to its self-complacency.

Whilst the grace of the Gentile dispensation was a secret only made known on the work of Christ being finished, its unparalleled glory was that "which eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had entered into the heart of man to conceive," till God revealed it by His Spirit. It was not the glory which forms the chief subject of direct prophecy, for that is earthly glory; it may glance at the other allusively, but Jewish expectation was not very wrong. It is not by violently wresting language, and giving it a meaning quite different from the literal, which would necessarily be general and vague, that we shall be most fully enabled to enter into the glory into which the faithful are now brought by the resurrection of Jesus, but by learning that the subject was entirely new, unthought and unheard of before.

The scriptural testimony to this is very abundant; and it appears to me important, in every point of view, to sec that the present dispensation is completely sui generis-not an improvement of the preceding, or an introduction to the coming one, but so entirely isolated that its directory of conduct would only apply to itself, that I would note some of the most striking scriptures on this most interesting point.

The language of our Lord (Matt. 13) has already been alluded to; but it is important on this point, as showing that the things which were secret before were now revealed. "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; for verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." In Mark 4:11 there is a little variation, interesting in this point, as pointing to the kingdom itself as having been heretofore a secret thing— "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God." But as the Lord Himself intimated to His disciples that they were not in the capacity of entering into the things of which He was both the Subject and the Communicator, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; and He will show you things to come." We must therefore look to the testimony of the Spirit through the apostles. And here I would notice that very remarkable testimony to the novelty and distinctness of this present dispensation in Rom. 16:25, 26. "Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to the only wise God be glory through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen."

Again (1 Cor. 2:6-10), “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him; but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.” “Now we have 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.” It would be necessary to transcribe the whole chapters iii., iv., and v. of the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, as bearing on the point. It will be sufficient at present to notice the marked contrast between the former and present dispensation. The ministration of death, written and engraven on stones was glorious; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? “If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.” “Even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.” This is sufficient to show that there is real contrast rather between the former and the present dispensations—that they are, in fact, as opposite as death and life.

(To be continued.)

The Secret of God: Part 3

(Continued from p. 211.)

I would now state the more direct testimony of the same apostle in the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians. “Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth.” The preceding verses state what God's good pleasure had been, even the secret of God in His mind from all eternity, not only to have a people on the earth in whom He would be glorified, but sons in heaven; with the Son of His love joint-heirs of all the glory He had given Him. The stability both of that in heaven as well as that on earth could only be in Christ. But the great wonder was that in the introducing of this novel and transcendent glory, it was not confined to those “whose were the promises,” but coming in a way of direct sovereignty on the part of God, and for the express purpose of displaying in the ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace, “that the Gentiles might praise God for His mercy.” The apostle therefore places Jews and Gentiles entirely on the same level as to this, “In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, that we (Jews) should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in, Christ; in Whom ye also (Gentiles) after that ye had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance (as common to both) until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.”

There was a twofold secret of God now made known. That any should have been chosen to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, was a thing quite novel to those whose proper expectation was Messiah over them, as the Son of David in earthly glory. But there was this besides, that it was to be preached unto the Gentiles, and that they were called into participation of it. Accordingly we find the apostle resuming the subject, chap. 3., “If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward (Gentiles), how that by revelation He made known onto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel; that I should preach among the Gentiles the untraceable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent, that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.”

And here the mischief of confounding all things, and limiting God to that which occupies our mind, is very apparent. The church has at the same time forgotten her distinctive glory, and learned to be high-minded: to judge from the thoughts of most Christians, one would think that the Jews were

kept distinct, and in their present state, to afford them evidence of God's favor to themselves. How little is it remembered, that the mystery made known, was, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ. But there is this, most important to be noticed, that the mystery, then revealed to the apostles by the Spirit, had not in other ages been made known to the sons of men, but from the beginning of the world had been hid in God. Now of “the restitution of all things God had spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets, since the world began;” so that it cannot be the same with the mystery now made known, and clearly proves that this mystery had not been the subject of prophetic testimony. “Restitution” necessarily implies a previous state, even that in which God had pronounced all things to be very good; and again shall God rest in them when brought back by Him, the Redeemer, even Christ Jesus. But the subject of this mystery had no previous existence, except in the purpose of God, and hence it is always dated by the Holy Spirit, as anterior to creation; “according as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4); “according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ: Who hath abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:9). “In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due time manifested His word through preaching” (Titus 1:2). This proves its complete independence of, and distinctness from, anything that had been known since the world began. Things might have been types of it, or, as the fullness of time approached, there might have been intimations of it; but it was not connected at all in character with those things. It is not a speculative matter, but one of great practical importance; as surely the bulk of scriptural testimony fully demonstrates. In this Epistle for instance, wherein we find the fullness of the church set forth, we find the Spirit in the apostle so speaking as to show us that this with Christ was the great mystery now made known. It is distinctly expressed in chap. 5., “this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church,” and again (chap. 6:19), “and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.” The great mystery then, or secret in the divine mind, now divulged, besides Christ the Head in heavenly glory over all things, is the church, the body of Christ, “the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.” It is “the church of the first-born [ones], which are written in heaven." Now unless its distinct glory, as blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, is seen, its character and service cannot he known. Heavenly glory was that which was not revealed to the saints of old; how could it be until His appearance? even of the Son of man Who is in heaven? “The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's, but the earth hath He given to the children of men.”

True, the patriarchs looked for a heavenly city, and confessed themselves, strangers and pilgrims on earth; so likewise David. But whatever the Spirit of Christ in them did testify, was but obscurely; “they searched what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories which should follow, unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into” (1 Peter 1:10). Abraham, the father of us all, had promises of seed numerous as the stars of heaven, and as the dust of the earth, and doubtless the one to be highly exalted above the other. But the church, in oneness of Spirit and of glory with the risen Lord, into which the saints are now brought, was not known till Jesus was glorified and the Holy Ghost had come. Hence we find the almost universal tenor of prophetic

testimony is to earthly glory, which could be apprehended before that Jesus was glorified, although only secured in and by Him. Now the effect of taking promises of earthly glory, and applying them to heavenly, has been to lose sight of the great purpose of God “to reconcile all things to Himself, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth,” by the blood of the cross (Col. 1:20): and “to gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth” (Eph. 1:10), thus placing the stability of both on a sure basis. But this is not all; for the church, taking that to herself which does not distinctly belong to her, has lost sight of what does, and hence has been exhibiting a Jewish character, rather than representing the fullness of Christ.

But before entering at any length into this, there are a few more testimonies to the point before us to be noticed. “Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to His saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory” (Col. 1:25-27). Again, (Col. 2:2-4), “That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ; wherein (i.e., in the mystery, margin) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Now here we have, first, the originality of that which was in the mystery, that it had been previously hidden from ages and generations. 2.—That there are riches of glory in it. 3.—All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are laid up in it. Well therefore might he ask the Colossians to pray that God would open a door of utterance “to speak the mystery of Christ.”

The passage in 1 Tim. 3:16 has been referred to for the point then in hand; but I would again notice that the fact of Incarnation was not a Jewish expectation, however the promise of Immanuel may appear to us to have properly raised it. For we find that it was a matter of distinct revelation to Peter. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;” “flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven” “God manifested in the flesh” was the great secret; He had spoken to them in divers ways before, but now He comes so near as to speak by His Son. This is the basis of everything: the moment the mystery of Christ is revealed, then, as led by the Spirit, are we capable of looking backward or forward into the counsels of God. With the soul resting on the great fact of God manifested in the flesh, as spiritual we may judge all things, see the several bearings of God's precious revelations, and learn the important truth of the instability of every creature out of God—in a word, learn “Christ the power of God and wisdom of God.”

Chapter 185

The Secret of God: Part 4

(Continued from p. 227.)

I would now briefly advert to the distinctness of the glory, into fellowship with which the saints are brought, having nothing at all analogous to it previous to its revelation. It appears to me of importance to remark that the glory of the church is distinctive and characteristic; that it was not directly revealed, previously to the coming down of the Holy Ghost. “None of the princes of this world knew it:” it was what “eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had entered into the heart of man to conceive.” It is best seen by contrasting it with the proper Jewish expectation of Messiah. Now it is most clear that they looked upon their Messiah as the Redeemer to deliver them and their land; to restore it to fruitfulness, to make them glorious as a people in the eyes of all among whom they had been despised; to make them also the channel of blessing to others; and all this when Jehovah should be their King “Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously” (Isa. 24:23). Besides all this, there was the real moral glory, “Thy people shall be all righteous,” a people in whose hearts the Spirit of God dwelt. “A new heart also will I give onto you, and a new spirit will I put within you, 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 do them, and ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers” (Ezek 26:26-28).

Now both in this place and in Jer. 31, where the new covenant with the house of Israel is stated at large, its connection with earthly blessing, and the glory of Jerusalem, and the land is most definitely marked; and it is only because we have read those accounts with pre-occupied minds that their strict application to Israel should ever have been questioned. Our Lord evidently alludes to this in His conversation with Nicodemus, “Marvel not that I said unto you, ye (Jews) must be born again;” their earthly blessing was only to be secured by God giving them His Spirit. And when Zacharias under the Holy Ghost, prophesied, it was evidently to the glory of Israel under Messiah. “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life” (Luke 1).

Now the mystery revealed of the church is its oneness with Christ. The Messiah, though of, was distinct from, Israel: the nation was not to be brought into oneness with Him, but He was to be over the nation, to fulfill the good pleasure of God to it. A king and a people are distinct, though they have a common interest, for a king is over his people. On the other hand Christ is never said to be King over His church, but the Head of it as His own body, “Head to His church over all things"; the Bridegroom, and the church His bride: language which while it implies identity, at the same time

expresses that distinctness which gives Him the pre-eminence. But the essential characteristic of the church is that its glory is heavenly. Those who believe in Jesus are made one with Him, not as “the Son of David after the flesh,” but as declared the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.” “The hope set before them is that which entereth into that within the vail, whither the Forerunner is for us entered.” Heaven is now opened, and in it is the resting-place of the church in Christ Jesus.

“To be accepted in the Beloved” to be brought into that complete oneness with Him, so that the love wherewith the Father loved Him, with the same He loves those who by His Spirit are thus made one with Him. To have everything which could be predicted of Him, predicted of the church, this was the mystery, the revelation of which made all old things to pass away, all the long cherished hopes of an Israelite were immediately given up by one who was thus brought into fellowship with the Father and the Son. What a word is that— “Fellowship” between the Creator and the creature, that they should have a common interest the one in the other! It would indeed have remained a hidden mystery, but the Incarnation of the Only-begotten shows how this can be. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should called the sons of God.” “Now are we sons of God,” though what we shall be hath not yet been manifested. It never could have entered into the mind of an Israelite, that such a glory was contemplated, as that any should be so completely identified with Jehovah Jesus, the God-man, as to have their vile body fashioned like unto His glorious body. But this was the eternal purpose of God, this was in His mind from before the foundation of the world— “Whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.” The Father not only prepared a body for Jesus to suffer in, but likewise a body mystical, in which He should be glorified; for He is to be glorified in His saints. His glory is not only personally to be exhibited, but to be exhibited in and through them. He is not only to bless by His personal presence, but His saints are the channel of blessing to others, as was originally promised to Abraham, “thou shalt be a blessing.” So now the church is the channel of blessing, even in its wilderness state; out of it alone go the living waters. “He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Jesus is the well of life, but the stream is dispensed through the church, and what blessedness shall there be when the world to come is no longer under angels, but under Jesus and His saints; the stream of life immediately flowing from Jesus through them, in an unhindered course to others. They shall be a blessing, as they are called to inherit a blessing; they shall be kings and priests unto God, and they shall reign over the earth as kings, and make known (and who so well able as those who know what grace is?) good to others.

“God hath called us into His own kingdom and glory;” “He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is said to Israel, “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee,” not that they obtain the glory of the Lord. In a word, their glory is distinct from the Lord's glory; that glory is something without them, but the glory of the church is identical with that of the Lord; the church is the vessel filled with glory, the fullness of Him Who filleth all in all. This was a something so far beyond thought, that well might the apprehension of it make old things to pass away.

Again, be it remembered, that the present blessing and glory of the church is distinctly heavenly; Jesus is now in heaven, and His people can only be in Spirit where He is. It seems nothing novel

to us to talk of heaven as our place, and of being in heaven, as our glory; yet what does this mean in the mouths of most but that heaven is to be enjoyed after earthly enjoyment has failed? That earth is the place for the enjoyment of the body; and that heaven will receive our departed spirits? But Jesus is “the Savior of the body,” “the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.” It was the brightness of the glory of Jesus the Son of Man, which filled Stephen with holy rapture; it was unto that likeness he looked to awake and be satisfied. But the calling of the church is now heavenly, its place now of rest is “in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” Believers now let pass old things, because “their citizenship is in heaven;” “they are no more of the world, even as Jesus is no more of the world.” “As He is, so are they in this world;” as He is the heavenly Man, so are they heavenly men; as He is the beloved Son, so are they sons beloved; as He is heir of all things, so are they heirs of all things. This is their standing, though they be locally in this world. This is indeed the new creation unheard of, unknown before, which places in such pre-eminence the least in the kingdom of heaven. They are heavenly—one with Christ the quickening Spirit, one with Him Who sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Here has been the mistake and confusion; heaven has been made the future instead of present blessing of the church. Hence believers have been Christians in hope, but Jews in practice. All hope of earthly blessing ceased with the rejection of Him in Whom alone the earth could be blessed, by those through whom the blessing was to be communicated: “the earth shall hear Jezreel.” From that moment, as was most significantly taught in darkness overspreading the earth, and the vail of the temple being rent, earth was, closed as to blessing from it and “heaven opened.” Those who will be blessed now must follow Jesus the only giver of blessing into heaven, “whither the Forerunner is for us entered;” until He comes from the right hand of the Father, blessing from the earth is barred. What an interesting moment is the present, “the kingdom of heaven opened!” Oh! if men knew but the gift of God, and the present blessing held out to them, how would they “press into it,” how would “they take it by force.” Testimony might be multiplied as to the distinct character and glory of the present dispensation, as being entirely novel, and in no feature corresponding with anything that had preceded. In a word, Christ and the church was the hidden mystery, the secret of God, until revealed by the Spirit coming down from Jesus glorified, not only to testify of it, but also to constitute it. As to what remains, I would apply the truth practically.

Chapter 186

The Secret of God: Part 5

(Concluded from p. 243.)

1.—It appears that the attempt to make all scriptural declarations of glory to concentrate in one has left the church with a very vague and undefined hope of its real glory and almost annihilated that which is its present glory. “There are bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial.” True that all glory radiates from Jesus, Who is the Head of earthly as well as heavenly glory. But to understand the church's present position and conduct, it is necessary to distinguish as to what her real calling is. Now as the church is called unto the glory of God, so is she called to be an imitator of God. (Eph. 5:1.) “To live godlily in this present world” is to exhibit the character of God in it, not as that character was displayed heretofore, but as it is now displayed in grace: God is dealing with the world in grace, and the church is to do the same. The only place where God is exercising judgment is among His own people. Alas! how completely is everything subverted: grace to the world, righteousness to the church is God's plan. His saints have reversed the order; harsh judgment on the world, and smooth speaking among themselves, have been a stumbling block in the way of the world, and settled the church in a state of self-complacency.

2.—I would remark that the only nationality of Christian ethics is that they are the practice of those who are in the world but not of the world, in other words of heavenly men on the earth. Wherefore, says the apostle to the Colossians, “if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world, &c?” He would not have them so forgetful of their calling that Jesus Christ had given Himself for their sins, “that He might deliver them out of this present evil world, according to the will of God their Father,” as to think for a moment that they were living in the world. Their calling was to conformity with Jesus; He lived by the living Father. What was He to the world? Nothing indeed more simplifies Christian practice than realizing our proper portion as not of the world but of God. And there is no precept, however hard to the flesh, but what we shall find to exhibit to us the lineaments of the Divine character towards ourselves: the measure we are required to mete to others is that which God has measured to us. “How is the gold become dim? How is the fine gold changed?” To what has not the name of Christian been prostituted? For surely it is a prostitution of its dignity to apply it to the world's service in any other way than grace. “I speak as unto wise men: judge ye what I say.” Is it fitting for heaven-born men to be worldly legislators and politicians? Does this prove that they are of God, or of the world? If the world hear them, is it not because “they are of the world and speak of the world?”

3.—It is most important to perceive the distinct character of the present dispensation, that it is not an improvement of the old, a new piece put on an old garment, but the mystery hidden from previous ages and generations, now brought to light, in reference to the many predictions of the world's blessing. Discrimination here is most needful, because the discovery of the peculiarity of this dispensation immediately shows that blessing cannot be brought about under it. Righteousness, not grace, is the principle to order the world. “A King shall reign in righteousness;” and he that reigns says, “I will not know a wicked person: whoso privily slandereth his neighbor

him will I cat off, him that hath a high look and a proud heart will I not suffer...He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight; I will early destroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord" (Psa. 101). It is therefore morally impossible that general earthly blessing can be secured under the present dispensation, which is one of bearing with evil, instead of punishing it; and therefore so long as the gospel continues to be preached as the testimony to God's grace, the earth's blessing must be deferred. That blessing will not, cannot, be, till God's "judgments are made manifest." Contempt cast on "the riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering," ushers in "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

4. —I would notice the fallacy of drawing any argument for the union of church and state, from analogy to Israel of old. Let it be admitted for a moment, that the principle of such a union was to be found there, there was only one principle in action, i. e. righteousness. God was then showing His wrath, and making His power known. He had taken onto Himself "a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors" (Deut. 4:34). Such a union therefore was then possible, because God's avowed principle of dealing with man, was righteousness, and His people were then ostensibly under the righteousness of the law; His own people were the instruments of vengeance on His enemies; and their enemies round about them. But surely it is not so now. God's principle towards the world has changed. He is not making "His power and His wrath known," but "the riches of His goodness and forbearance." And His own people are called upon to exhibit His own character. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, long-suffering, forbearance," &c. qualifications by no means suited to order the world. This can only be done by Him who is a "Revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." The attempt has been made to apply Christianity to rule, and the end has been corruption in the church, and insubordination in the state: "the rent is become worse."

Lastly, I would apply what has been said to one branch of Christian conduct, in which, for lack of discrimination, we have lamentably failed—I mean subjection to the powers that be. To these the Christian is required to yield implicit subjection; and when it comes to the alternative, to obey them or God, then his obedience to God will throw him into suffering from them. Obedience and suffering are the portion of the heavenly man while in this world. Now it has been assumed, hastily assumed, that, because obedience to the powers that be is so strictly charged upon Christians, and that those powers are "ordained of God," they must necessarily be Christian. Hence Christian privileges have been mixed with civil rights, and Christians have been looking to the powers to reciprocate to them protection and support for their obedience. There is hardly a more glaring instance of the way in which self-love and a desire of ease will make us forget the simplest facts than in the case before us. The powers to which the Christians were called on to show implicit obedience were heathen emperors and magistrates, their most bitter persecutors; and yet they were ordained of God. Nebuchadnezzar, into whose hands God committed such largeness of power, was as much ordained of God as our Edward VI, and a Christian's obedience to a Nero was on the same principle as to Justinian. In fact we have limited God to our notions of propriety; we will hardly permit Him to use the instruments He chooses for holding the world in some degree of order, even now; and therefore we take the ordering of it into our own hands. God paid Nebuchadnezzar for his services that he served against Tire, by giving him the land of Egypt

(Ezek. 29:18-20); and so God now honors those civil rulers in His providence who honor Him.

But this has nothing to do with grace. Cyrus was God's shepherd (Isa. 44:28), yet for a widely different purpose and a widely different reward from a pastor of His church. The principle of obedience to the civil magistrate is one which is entirely independent of their character and of circumstances. In the powers that be, the Christian recognizes God's ordering and yields subjection, not because he is a citizen of this or that country, but because he is a citizen of heaven. Old things have passed away from him; what things he accounted gain before, he now esteems loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Savior; and it may safely be affirmed that a Christian born as to the flesh in this country, but carried by circumstance into Turkey, would, as implicitly and as to God, obey the ruling power in that country as he would the king here. He is brought into subjection to God, and therefore owns God in all His ordinances. Nor is it unimportant to notice, that it is not said that the powers that be are ordained of Christ, but of God; not of Christ as the anointed Man. The time shall be when they will be so ordained. When that shall be made known in act, to which Jesus has now the title (as it is written, “I will make him my first-born higher than the kings of the earth,” Psa. 89:27, “Prince of the kings of the earth,” “Lord of Lords,” and “King of Kings”), then shall He, as King, reign in righteousness, and the Princes shall rule in judgment. But till He, as the anointed Man, reigns, His people cannot be called to rule—their calling is to suffer.

Beloved brethren, “avenge not yourselves,” “be patient till the coming of the Lord.” True, the world is in a dark and fearful confusion; but we cannot right it by intermeddling with it. But we may remove one of the stumbling blocks out of its way, by showing that, through faith in Him Who overcame its we overcome it also; and that we are not in fear now as others, but with that before us which makes our flesh to tremble, and rottenness to enter our bones— “seeing on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming to pass on the earth,” we can rest in the day of trouble, we can “lift up our heads, because our redemption draweth nigh.” J. L. H.

Chapter 187

Seeing Christ Glorified

Note the effects of the power of seeing the glorified Christ more distinctly. It absorbs the heart. “I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung.” It is not only that we have given them up, but their power is gone. The actual trials on the path become matter of joy; they are the fellowship of His sufferings, conformity to His death. It gives unity of action and perseverance. It imparts a heavenly character to the path (the calling is above), confidence and joy in reference to God. It is God's calling, and in the most blessed way in Christ Jesus. Christ Himself is the object; but this is united with our being glorified by divine favor resting on us as on Him. Resurrection too is “from among the dead “: for this too divine righteousness in Christ Himself can alone fit or suffice.

Chapter 188

Shiloh in Genesis 49:10

It has been said that Shiloh is taken in its local sense as the sanctuary where the young Samuel was trained; and that, if doctrinal perversions did not interfere, hardly any one would doubt this to be the true sense.

What the training of the young Samuel has to do with it I cannot tell: if Shiloh refer to this, it is still a prophecy, but a prophecy very ill interpreted. It seems irrational to suppose that it is a divinely inspired prophecy about the name of the place where the young Samuel was trained, because the tabernacle was there. What is “till Shiloh come"? and yet more “to him shall the gathering (or, “obedience”) of the peoples be”? What has that to do with the place the young Samuel was trained in? It is not “people” (fancy might have spoken of the tabernacle so), but “peoples.”

The truth is that this use of Shiloh for the name of a place is a modern Jewish opposition to the faith of Jesus being the Messiah. All the old Jewish interpreters referred this to Messiah with one consent, though the root of the word be disputed. R. Lipmann first proposed to read it “till they come to Shiloh,” as in 1 Sam. 4:12, where the words are so translated. And this a certain Teller in the last century defended, applying it to the fact in Joshua, that at the close of the war they pitched the tabernacle in Shiloh; and then Judah ceased to take the lead which in Numbers had been given him in the wilderness, Reuben and Gad left, &c. This interpretation has been adopted by the rationalists, as Eichhorn, Ammon, Bleek, Tuch, &c., denying any application to the Messiah.

The soberest and best Hebrew scholars, even rationalists, take it as referring to peace, and see Messiah in it as Prince of Peace, as the scepter shows dominion. They do so on Hebrew grounds, without troubling themselves about prophecy and its fulfillment. It is also translated “till he (Judah) come to rest:” seeing in it the full accomplishment of the promises to Israel when the nations of the earth will be subject, some adding the coming of Shiloh, when the land was distributed as a first installment and turning-point, because Israel got its rest of promise in first provisional fulfillment there.

Now these questions of interpretation we cannot enter into here. The objections of some (as Kurz) to a personal Messiah being as yet the subject of prophecy, are null. The Lord Himself says, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad.” In principle I see nothing to object to in a germinant accomplishment for responsible Israel, to be fully accomplished in their final glory with Messiah. That the prophecy is a pretended prophecy, after the event, has been shown to be absurd on the face of it; for the statements are, in almost every particular, such as no one speaking from the event could have made. You must always bear in mind that these rationalists never search even whether a passage may be a prophecy. They start with the assertion that there can be none, and then seek to show how the passage may have otherwise arisen. In this case the absurdity lies on the surface. Jacob declares that he speaks of the end of days, that this goes on to the full blessing of Israel. The gathering of the nations is therefore the natural interpretation, for those who believe in prophecy and the divine inspiration of scripture.

That there was a provisional inbringing of blessing, and the first proposal of it on Israel's responsibility in the first coming of Christ, is the belief of all Christians, and the express teaching of Peter in Acts 3 (now put off till Israel repent, while the church is being gathered, and yet to be fulfilled), and then to be accomplished by a glorious intervention in the last days, I have no doubt. And Judah is preserved as a tribe (I do not see more necessarily in Shebet" scepter") for that day. It certainly never will be fulfilled till then. It has had, in the progressive development of Israel's victory, preparatory events. To make it Samuel's training-place is simply nonsense.

It is a question whether the name be not itself given from the fact of Joshua's sitting down there to distribute the conquered land. The point difficult to receive from the words is Israel's coming to Shiloh. Either it is, "until rest come," or, "until Judah come to Shiloh." If not, the sentence is broken off, and there is no antecedent to "come." It is "people," (as the French on) with no one mentioned before. If the ancient interpretation, Targums, &c., all which take it as Messiah, be not received, it is "till rest come," or "till Judah come to rest." The words "to him shall the gathering of the peoples be" are the difficulty then. If it be not translated "till Shiloh come," the gathering will be to Judah, looked at as representing the people, as Judah did, and specially the stock of the house of David and Christ, in contrast with the ten tribes. That the people first should be the vessel of God's testimony, and Messiah take their place on their failure, and gather the peoples, is the distinct declaration of all prophecy. It is fully developed in Isa. 49, where Messiah declares He has labored in vain, if it be Israel; and then His gathering the remnant of Israel and the nations is fully set forth, going on to the rest and glory of Israel. It is the great subject. of prophecy—Messiah taking up the promise as a faithful servant when Israel had failed. Hence He is the true Vine; as Israel was the old vine, but was fruitless or bore wild grapes.

Chapter 189

Sorrowful Words From a Sorrowful Heart: Review

Such is the title of a short paper from an Anonymous brother. Sorrow for sinful acts and state is of God, where the truth is still faithfully clung to in the sorrow. It is a mistake if it be supposed that many have not mourned over a high and hard self-confidence, not merely where wrongs were done, but slighting grace, the only healing principle in an evil day. Any one, even unconverted men, can condemn mistakes slashingly, not only erring themselves in an opposite way, but fostering and confirming the pride of knowledge (often equivocal) and the assumption of an impregnable position, or “true ground” (often a delusion). “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Either grace or truth alone, perhaps only so-called, misleads. It is not the Christ we received, in Whom we are to walk, if we would walk acceptably to God. Is there Philadelphia nowhere, because Laodicea is come?

Nothing unkind is said or insinuated (for I really do not know); but it seems pertinent to ask if our dear brother who thus sorrows, cleaves to the Lord with full purpose of heart? Or is he, through despair because of the faults of others, giving up thorough devoted heart—adhesion to the truth he values so highly in the writings of a departed brother? To own without acting on the truth is bad testimony. Is he as a fact walking in the love he feels so lacking generally? Is he also “walking in truth”? This surely is essential Has he no greater joy than to hear of any children of God so walking? Truth and love together magnify the Lord. Is he, whatever be the weakness, keeping Christ's word and not denying His name? Or is he while complaining of others shirking the cross and tampering with those ways of Christendom which he once judged to be faithless?

Brotherly kindness, and love above that even, are surely of God; but are they not, as the role, where the truth is most prized? Or does our brother take the ground of “I, even I, only"? In this case he must forgive one who desires to weigh before God his “sorrowful words,” and has nothing but the kindest affections toward their author, if he express the fear that he deceives himself and is hardly fair toward not a few. Surely God has His 7,000; and they are not so hidden, now that the Holy Spirit is come down, as to escape a single eye. For gathering to Christ's name is a distinct and abiding part of our allegiance. He died not to save only but to gather together in one. No true heart, cognizant of this, will ever make it secondary. One may have to purge himself from vessels to dishonor; yet one cannot rest negatively there, but follow His will with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Without this it is vain to talk of love. “Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:2, 3).

Chapter 190

Thoughts on the Spiritual Nature of the Present Dispensation: Part 1

It has been the invariable method of God, to take occasion from every successive failure of the creature, more clearly to manifest His own perfections; and while in so doing He has brought Himself nearer to man, He has at the same time progressively increased man's responsibility. The failure has ever been from man's waywardness; the glory of getting good out of evil, God's sole prerogative. “Where sin abounded, grace much more abounded,” while true in individual blessing to God's elect, is specially true in each successive dispensation, from the fall to “the fullness of time in which God sent forth His Son;” which even yet awaits a fuller development “in the dispensation of the fullness of times, when He shall gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth” (Eph. 1:10). The progress of the divine dispensations is thus summarily stated by the apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “God, who at sundry times (πολυμερ■ς) and in divers manners (πολυτρ■πως), spake in time past unto the fathers, by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son” (Heb. 1:1, 2).

The contrast here is not merely between the prophets and the Son, but also between the fullness of the manifestation of God in the Son compared with the partial character of previous manifestations. They were but piecemeal. At one time there was a revelation of mercy, at another of power, at another of faithfulness; and in ways too sufficiently indicative of their obscurity—in a vision, or a dream. But in Jesus the whole effulgence of the divine character shone forth. He was “the brightness of glory.” “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also.” And so entirely divested of obscurity was the manifestation, that one could say, “That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life,” in a word, “God manifested in the flesh.”

This progress has been to greater intimacy (if the expression may reverently be used) between God and man. He was known to the fathers by the name of “God Almighty” (Ex. 6:3). To the Israelites He was made known by His name “Jehovah,” a great God and “very present help in time of trouble,” as well as a holy and jealous God. This was the burthen of the testimony of God's servants the prophets, whom He sent, “rising early and sending, until there was no remedy.” Israel had not only failed to manifest Jehovah, but the end was “that the name of God was blasphemed through them among the heathen” (Ezek. 36:23; Rom. 2:24.)

The latest testimony to them was that of John, who came in the way of righteousness; and then another dispensation was announced. “The law and the prophets were until John; since that time, the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it” (Luke 16:16). But the dispensation might not pass without the vindication of God's wisdom in it, that it was holy, just, and good; until “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem that were ender the law” (Gal. 4:3, 4). He took it up, and what in man had failed was in Him magnified. No jot or tittle of the law passed till all was fulfilled. Every one of its requirements was met by the Lord, and God was with Him (Acts 10:38). In Him, the “righteous Servant,” was exhibited God's power (Christ the power of God), acknowledged and felt, reasoned against indeed as to its source

(“whence has this man this power? what manner of man is this?”), but too palpable to be gainsayed.

Having established His claim to be “the Just One” (“which of you convinceth Me of sin?” “the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me”), He further vindicated God in the law by undergoing its awful curse; and thus set it aside. He was “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” and declared to be the righteous One by His resurrection; and not only so, but exalted as such, and declared to be “worthy to receive power, and riches, and glory, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and blessing.” It is important to remark that the old dispensation was completely set aside, not renovated or altered; and that before the kingdom of God which was announced, was set up in power, an opportunity was afforded by the death of Christ and the fulfillment of the law, for a further display of the character of God previous to the exercise of active power and retributive justice in His kingdom by Him who was worthy to receive power.

This intermediate dispensation is that in which we are. “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” In order to the public manifestation of God's grace, not only was it needful for man to be exhibited in his utter helplessness and apostasy, but likewise for the law to be set aside, or it would stand as a barrier of God's own raising against it. Therefore instead of God manifested through Israel by the exercise of His power in and through them, and showing His holy character through their reflection of it— “be ye holy, for I am holy;” and thus proving what a great and terrible God He was—how inaccessible by man, because of His holiness—with the preservation of every previously manifested perfection of God—we now have seen Him set forth in Christ as “reconciling the world unto Himself;” and instead of keeping sinners at a distance from Him, “preaching peace by Jesus Christ.”

But while God is thus set forth, in all this nearness to sinners, as was exhibited on the part of Jesus being conversant with them, those who were drawn by God's grace into His presence were to become the means of exhibiting the presence of God in the world. How now is God manifested in nearness to man? In Israel He was manifested to be near them by His protection, and the confession of His presence was extorted from the mouth of His enemies by His judgments. But it is not so now. The dispensation is changed from active righteousness to grace; God is letting men alone, by not interfering now in vengeance on sinners who see it not, and therefore “despise the riches of His goodness, and, forbearance, and longsuffering,” and are “treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.” God, in all the nearness of grace, is actually less acknowledged than in all the distance the law had made between Him and man.

The reason is obvious. God's presence was then manifest to sense, but now in the power of deliverance from the world; and not only did the one more readily address itself naturally to man than the other, but the failure has been more decided. So long as Jesus remained on earth, the presence of God was felt if not acknowledged, “God was manifest in the flesh.” It was, however, expedient for His disciples that He should go away—expedient for them! It is marvelous that it should have been so. His presence, which was the joy of their heart and only stability, was to be lost to them, in order to increase their blessing. Was it, therefore, possible for them to have God nearer to them than to have His presence, whose name was “Immanuel, God with us?” Yes, this was even possible; and therefore, it was expedient that Jesus should ascend. He had the power of life on earth—He could have so sustained it, as He showed in Lazarus, as to prevent death. But

this, after all, would have been but the Adam life prolonged. It was at His ascension that Jesus was proved to be the quickening spirit— “because I live, ye shall live also” —live out of death—triumph over death. “Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory;” it was resurrection life with God.

What then do we see, but the same Jesus Who was crucified, at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high? We see God's perfect complacency in a man—even the man Christ Jesus; so that we have not only the great principle of God's love in the incarnation of the Son of God, but we have the result of that in the glory to which man is to he exalted. Because He humbled Himself, He was exalted; and this exaltation was in that which alone was capable of exaltation—even the nature He had taken into union with Himself But this also was in order to further nearness of God to man. Having had God with him, he was now to have God in him.

“He being exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.” There was the word made good, “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, 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.” Here, then, is the progress of God's manifestation, marked indeed not only by outward power, but more by His presence pressing itself on the conscience of men (Acts 4:33; 1 Cor. 14:24, 25). Here then in the saints, in the indwelling of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 6:19; 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16), it is manifested that there is a God of judgment, and that by Him actions are weighed. This is the very end of the people of God being left here, the Spirit (Whom the world cannot receive) in and through them being to convince the world of sin (John 16:7-11). Here we have brought out clearly the marvel of God's dealing with the world in grace, and yet showing Himself in His saints as “the righteous God That loveth righteousness.”

If God be not here, where is He? And hence the deep and solemn importance of being sound in the faith of the deity, and personality of the Holy Ghost. “The Holy Ghost was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Surely it would be destructive to His deity, and blasphemy against His person, ever to assert that He was not as to being; as it would be destructive to the existence of the saints under former dispensations to say they were not born of Him. The gravamen of Israel's apostasy, as summed up by Stephen, is, “Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye;” and again we read, “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” “Whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness to us, for after that He had said before, &c.” These are testimonies amply sufficient to show that the blessed agent, in testimony and in grace, has ever been the Holy Spirit. The expression of our Lord, as commented on by John, must therefore have another meaning; and the understanding of it unfolds the character and blessing of the present dispensation.

Chapter 191

Thoughts on the Spiritual Nature of the Present Dispensation: Part 2

We see the wonderful, and to us most blessed, union of God and man in the person of our adorable Lord, the object of faith and rest of the soul. In virtue of this union, those who believe and abide in Him have the constant indwelling of the Holy Ghost with them, according to that word, “He that believeth in Me, as the scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” This is, in fact, the real constitution of the church. To assert the interruption of the Spirit's presence, save as to our unbelief, or to assert His influence and not His person, is to make a gap in that which the Lord declares to be continuous: “He shall abide with you forever;” yea, is it not to take up the language of infidelity of old, “The Lord hath forsaken the earth” (Ezek. 8:12, 9: 9)? Unless therefore it be asserted that believers are not one with Christ, the presence of the Spirit cannot be denied to be their portion, because it is in virtue of that union that the Spirit dwells among them, “that He may be with you forever.” The presence of Christ could only have been the portion of the few immediately favored with our Lord's presence on the earth, had He remained. The Spirit would fulfill in all ages, to those who would confide in Him, the gracious part of teacher, reprover, adviser, and tender soother of all their fears; which Jesus had done while personally conversant with them on earth. The expression, “the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified,” compared with the declaration of the Lord (John 16:7), “it is expedient for you that I go away,” opens out to us most blessedly the peculiar character of the dispensation in which we are, and its distinguishing blessing to those who abide in Christ. Jesus is glorified, the Spirit come, and the portion of the Church is one with Him as risen: “as He is, so are we in this world.”

This is closely bound up with “the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory.” “Will God indeed dwell on the earth?” is not now answered by the glory of God filling the house which Solomon built, but in the perpetual testimony of the Spirit to the fact of man dwelling with God, “the Only-begotten in the bosom of the Father;” even He “that humbled Himself to death, yea, the death of the cross,” being exalted as man into that glory which He had before the world was. How “expedient therefore that He should go away,” that we might know God's condescension to man. The Spirit in the children of God is the testimony of this to the world now; and it shall be fully demonstrated at the period to which, now groaning, they look forward, “the revelation of the sons of God,” when Jesus shall be manifested as “the first-born among many brethren.”

Let us notice how necessarily the dispensation of the Spirit flows from the fact of the incarnation and ascension. The man Jesus must be glorified ere the Spirit's dispensation was. For as Jesus, the Son of God, had glorified His Father, and not sought His own glory; and as it is the Father's will “that all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father,” so the Spirit seeketh not His own glory. But says Jesus, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. For He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He shall show you things to come; He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine and show it unto you.” The two great

branches of the Spirit's testimony are to the sufferings of Christ and His glories.

And these are truths, yea, the only truths, that is, the only things that have intrinsic and therefore unfading excellence in them. Jesus is the truth. “He came by water and by blood, not by water only, but by water and by blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” History may make us acquainted with the fact of the crucifixion; but the Spirit alone can teach its wondrous result, in leading the conscience to the blood of the Lamb, opening therein God's counsel of peace to sinners, with the preservation and illustration of every previously manifested perfection of God— “a just God and a Savior.” So again the assent of the understanding may be given to the fact of the ascension and consequent glory of Jesus; but it is the Spirit's province to direct the eye of the believer to his portion in it, resulting again from the fact of the incarnation of the Son of God. “Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him; but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.” Now in all this we find “God's thoughts not as ours,” in that man is entirely turned away from himself to an object without him for present comfort and future glory. “Look unto Me and be ye saved.” “He shall take of mine and show it unto you.” It is the rightful glory of Jesus to which He points; and the believers share in it from the love which brought Him down into our sad necessities. Disconnect the two, the sufferings and the glories, and there must needs be vagueness in peace and hope; the power of both, applied by the Spirit to faith, is our victory over the world.

In connection with these there is also another thing. Jesus, to establish the mind of His disciples on leaving them, comforts them with the words recorded in John 14:29; 15:15; 16:12. It is by the Spirit Who searcheth all things &c., that, as friends, believers are admitted into the counsels of God (1 Cor. 2:16). It is thus that without new revelations the Spirit, by opening and applying His own writings according to the exigencies of the church, guides into all truth. “Lo! I have told you beforehand.” This is their safeguard against surprise. He is “the Spirit of counsel and wisdom,” not by setting man's will to work on his own materials, but by turning the thoughts to Jesus Who is our wisdom; and it is only as things bear on Him and are connected with Him, that they are the truth.

Thus “those who have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” are enabled to judge righteous judgment. Everything by the Spirit is brought to Jesus as the light, and there His reality is discovered. Hence it is that when the influence of the Spirit, apart from His real presence and guidance, has been looked to, the mind of man has been accustomed to reason on the things of God; and, instead of the judgment of the Spirit, to have only that of man. Thus the way has been opened for departure from the ground-work of personal acceptance, or even to the wildest fanaticism. This has been the case whenever the peculiar characteristic of this as the spiritual dispensation (i.e. the dispensation in which the Holy Ghost is the blessed agent, glorifying not Himself but Jesus) has been lost sight of. Forgetfulness of this has tended to place even the Lord's people in a false position. Looking only to spiritual agency within them (so far undoubtedly right), they have been led into an unmeaning vagueness of hope, and have almost practically dissociated the hope of glory from the resurrection state, and connected it with that of the separate spirit. Hence has arisen the sad mistake of a believer's real position in the world, and the vain attempt to regenerate it, save by the intervention of Him Who says, “Behold, I create all things new.”

The world has been looked on as a scene of possible enjoyment, the full tide of evil and power of death in it being recognized only by those who “have passed from death to life,” who know that they “are of God, and that the whole world lieth. in wickedness.” The spiritual man, he that is quickened together with Christ, one with the risen and ascended Jesus in Spirit, ceases from the vain attempt to improve the world. The real liberty, into which he is brought by truth, is the perception of things as they actually are in the sight of God. The world and its lusts are known as not of the Father, and therefore pass away; and hence joy in victory over it, and not being of it, through Him “Who gave Himself for us that He might deliver us out of this present evil world” (age).

How momentous to know our real character as Christians, specially in the present day, so remarkable for many anxious attempts at bettering the condition of man; and yet all must fail, all fall before the power of evil, because there is no power or wisdom against it but in Him Who is “the power of God and wisdom of God.” Every advance that man has been able to make has left him short of life. This, then, is the portion of a spiritual man he stands in the power of life ever surrounded by death, and is therefore enabled to judge righteous judgment, because he can judge not according to appearances but according to realities. It is true that, being quickened by the Spirit of God, he is able “to see the kingdom of God;” and his mind being necessarily versed in realities, and these realities being God and His Christ, whilst he learns the vanity of all that is in the world, he acquires a refinement and delicacy of mind which converse with God never fails to give. But there is exceeding great danger lest we mistake intellectual refinement for spirituality. The Spirit of God being the Spirit of truth, he that is born of the Spirit is of the truth, and is versed in the realities of all things.

It is not the abstraction of the mind from the scene of evil to an imaginary scene of good, but whilst being in the evil, we recognize it in all its fearful extent, and detect it under the fairest outside, rising above it personally through Him Who was in it and felt its full pressure, in the blessed confidence that He overcame it all. In the world, not of the world, and therefore capacitated not only to see its misery, but to minister to it (and hence “the spiritual man judgeth all things"), we are enabled to bring forth the judgment of God upon circumstances apparently trivial. This is much opened to us in 1 Cor. 7. We find the apostle giving his judgment, not by immediate revelation from God, but as one who had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful, and had the Spirit of God (δοκ■ δ■ κ■γ■ πνε■μα θεο■ ■χειν), he applies the judgment of the Spirit in him to circumstances of the most domestic character. It is thus he judges all things, being himself only a looker on, and therefore enabled in all calmness to see what those who are themselves engaged in it, cannot. “Man looks on the outside,” he may view a thing everywhere, but the Spirit gets at the principle, i.e. what is before God. In a very little matter a great principle may be at stake, and hence the shortcoming even of worldly wisdom in worldly things. “The Lord taketh the wise in their own craftiness” (1 Cor. 3:19).

(To be continued.)

Chapter 192

Thoughts on the Spiritual Nature of the Present Dispensation: Part 3

(Concluded from page 291.)

It is the exercise by the Spirit of a sound mind, not that which would judge from results on the probable bearing of anything in given circumstances. Let us beware of its counterfeit and mere unbelief—the keeping out of God, but ever bring Him in, as the One in Whose hand are results, as paramount to the circumstances of human infirmity. Soundness of mind must necessarily appear folly in the estimation of the world; “but wisdom is justified of her children.” It is a subject of deep humiliation in us all to see how far we come short of this soundness of mind, by conferring with flesh and blood; acting it may be on a right motive at first, but with a wrong expectation, which leads to the employment of means not justified, and to disappointment. Nothing can be more contrary to soundness of mind than the results which have been and are, perhaps by many, expected from modern missionary exertions. The conduct of them and expectations from them have brought about a most morbid state of religious excitement, mistaken spirituality, and have tended to conceal the real destitution of the church, and to make her say, “I am rich and increased with goods,” when her very necessity which has driven her to seek help from the world is the saddest proof of decrepitude.

It will not be out of place to notice here the expression in Rom. 8, “To be carnally minded is death, to be spiritually minded is life and peace,” ver. 6, φρ■νημα τ■ς σαρκ■ς, φρ■νημα το■ πνε■ματος. The words of the preceding verse, ο■ κατ■ σ■ρκα τ■ τ■ς σαρκ■ς φροωο■σιν, &c., plainly show that a spiritual mind is not an improvement of the natural mind: let this be cultivated to any extent of intellectual attainment, it still only fulfills “the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (Eph. 2). It is the portion alone of those who are κατ■ πνε■μα. The things of the Spirit are not only out of the province of the natural mind, but foolishness unto it (1 Cor. 2:14). Hence when Christianity has been treated as a science, and made the subject of mere intellect, being judged by those who are κατ■ σ■ρκα it has lost its real character. It is not that it may not call into exercise the highest intellect, for surely it well may; but when it is made the subject-matter of intellect, instead of intellect being subject unto it, men are “always learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” They are ever exercising their art to establish it by evidence on which the flesh can rest, or else take up some of the deductions of esteemed theologians, instead of searching the scriptures themselves.

From this most profitless state the Spirit delivers: “as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God.” It is the Spirit of liberty; the children, free in their Father's house, have no longer the inquiry to make, “what is truth?” They have the witness in themselves, and desire to be guided into all truth. But the flesh would ever draw false inferences from revealed truth, even truth brought by the Spirit to the mind. We have a memorable instance of this in Peter (Matt. 16), drawing his own conclusion from the confession he had just made; but, says the Lord, ο■ φρονε■ς τ■ το■ θεο■, ■λλ■ τ■ τ■ν ■νθρ■πων. A spiritual mind is that which at once perceives the bearing of anything on the glory of the Lord, this characteristically distinguishes it from refinement of

sentiment. Thus it was in Jesus. He was of quick understanding (scent) in the fear of the Lord; by this He immediately saw the gist of Satan's temptations. They appear to the mere natural man as those which are morally harmlessly even as those which would have demonstrated His power, and turned to Satan's own confusion; but Jesus looked at them as bearing on His Father's honor.

We shall see this more strongly by contrast. There could not have seemed a conclusion for the church to come to more legitimate than that, when learning, rank, talent, influence (all of which had been united against her), fell before her, and were become her allies, she should then fill the world with blessing. But this was savoring not the things of God, but of men. The Spirit invariably leads to where Christ is. "If ye then be risen with Christ, "τ■ ■νω φρονε■τε, &c. It is ever the effort of the prince of this world to make us forget that the world is under the power of death, because it has rejected the Prince of life, that its judgment is only respited for the purpose of manifesting God's longsuffering, that all that is in the world, is not of the Father, and therefore He cannot be served by it. Hence ο■ τ■ ■π■γεια φρονο■ντες are enemies of the cross of Christ. To be spiritually minded is life, is to have risen up out of all this death, is to know them as death, and to know Christ as the power of life. Nothing has had a more hurtful tendency in hindering present blessing and encouraging unwarrantable expectations, than the separation of the work of the Spirit from the glory of Christ, to Whom He invariably points. Hence in a great measure has arisen the notion that the personal reign of Christ during the millennium is returning to the flesh from the Spirit, and retrograding instead of advancing in blessing. But what is real blessing? One who is at all quickened by the Spirit, knows it to consist in the knowledge and consequent enjoyment of God. Therefore every advance in the manifestation of God is an accession of blessing to those really in communion with Him.

It is true that now to faith is revealed the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "But the Son of man shall come in His own glory and in the glory of His Father," &c. And His triumph is theirs, "every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus, and every tongue confess" Him. While then the joy of the saints will be full ("I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness"), how is this to be effected but by fresh energy of the Spirit? "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." And while there is the display of the Spirit's power in the bodies of those who have received the first fruits of the Spirit, the great outpouring of the Spirit is coincident with this—the exhaustion of the promise in Joel, "I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;" and the fulfillment of the new covenant in all its largeness to the Jew, in the very explicit language of Jer. 31 and Ezek. 36.

It seems much to have been forgotten that we have only had as yet the first fruits of the Spirit. The fall out-pouring is for another dispensation, which, as contrasted with this, is not fleshly as opposed to spiritual; but one of righteousness as opposed to grace. It is the manifestation of God's power in Christ over evil, so longed for by the still groaning creation. Here the evil in man's nature is restrained from fully developing itself in all by the secret power of God, and in the saints kept under by the indwelling of God's Spirit, God's judicial power being only now revealed against it (Rom. 1), but not as yet actually in exercise to this end. Then a King reigns in righteousness, having taken His power and bound Satan, the evil one, and "the way of iniquity shall perish." Now liberty is given to evil, i e, man is left to himself (in dispensation at least), save that He Who is over all orders all, and makes "the wrath of man to praise Him." But then God in the revealed power of

the Son will not suffer it: “the soul that sinneth, it shall surely die;” “He shall destroy the works of the devil.”

In a word, we may say that the millennial dispensation is at least, as to the Jews upon earth, the combination of that in which both they have failed in theirs, and Christians in this—the full display of the Spirit on the heart and of earthly blessing in righteousness. So far from being unspiritual, the end of the millennial dispensation to which we are permitted to look (and surely it is written for our instruction) affords a fresh proof that man under every advantage of nearness to God, outward blessing, testimony of the word and past experience too, will assuredly fail, unless dwelt in by the Spirit of God. Then will be demonstrated publicly, that which the believer now knows experimentally, “that all flesh is grass “; that there is no real communion with God but by His Spirit; and that security is not “by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Those therefore who resist the testimony of God to the pre-millennial advent of Christ, and His reign with His saints perfectly conformed to His image in resurrection over the earth, are necessarily deprived of the instruction in a great moral truth respecting God. For He will thus be demonstrated to be the only One with Whom there is “no variableness neither shadow of turning,” by having proved the changeableness of the creature under every circumstance of blessing short of new creation. Nor is it uninstructive to notice that, in thus connecting the present with the dispensation which is on the eve of being introduced, we are carried on in the fullness of personal security and blessing, to learn in it more of God, yea, of the riches of His grace, in being the witnesses of another apostasy, under circumstances the most favorable for the creature to have stood. The Lord give us to know the exceeding great blessing of being brought to “stand in grace.” Amen.

J. L. H.

Chapter 193

On Titus: Introduction

The Epistle before us has a character a good deal in common with those to Timothy, particularly with the First Epistle, but not without a certain answer to the Second also. Order however is a prominent feature. A charge for its maintenance was given to Titus, rather than that care for doctrine which is so conspicuous, though order is not forgotten, in the First Epistle to Timothy. Without doubt the different circumstances called for these differences of object. Salvation shines brightly throughout.

There is another thing which modifies them all. Titus, though a trusty companion of the apostle, and his own child according to the faith no less than Timothy, did not stand in the same place of intimate affection as the younger laborer, into whose heart the apostle could pour out his feelings, sorrowful or bright, without reserve. This we saw strikingly in the Second Epistle to Timothy; it has no place in the Epistle to Titus, where the exigencies of the work and of the workman occupy (with saving grace and the moral order of the saints) the Epistle. It is remarkable that Titus has no mention in the Acts of the Apostles, where we hear so much of Timothy. But there is no warrant for supposing that his visit to Dalmatia subsequent to the present Epistle had anything in common with the state of Demos. The frequent and most honorable mention of his service in the Epistles of Paul ought to leave no doubt of his fidelity and devotedness from first to last.

In Gal. 2 Titus comes before us in a deeply interesting manner. He was one of the “certain others” from among the saints at Antioch, who went with Paul and Barnabas to the great council at Jerusalem. No one was a more suited companion of the apostle, for Titus was a Greek, and an uncircumcised man. He was therefore just a case in point. Must this Gentile believer be circumcised? Must he keep the law of Moses? The apostles and the elders, with the assembly as a whole, decided against any such compulsion. As the apostle Peter pointed out, the Holy Spirit had already decided the question by putting no difference between the circumcised and uncircumcised believers. Their hearts alike were purified by faith, and the heart—knowing God had given the Holy Ghost to both. It was tempting God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which the fathers or the sons of Israel never were able to bear. Salvation is wholly through grace and by faith, consequently as open to the Gentile as to the Jew. If Moses had in every city those who preached him in the synagogues, it was now a question for all Christians of preaching our Lord Jesus Christ. The boldness of faith in the apostle was entirely vindicated at the council. And the grace already manifested in the call of Titus was confirmed by apostolic authority, not alone among the Gentiles, but in Jerusalem itself.

Some have confounded Titus with Timothy, and deliberately argued that the latter was Luke's name for the same person. Whatever may be the ingenuity of the argument, scripture is wholly opposed. Timothy is expressly said to be the son of a Jewish believing woman; and Paul took and circumcised him, not by compulsion, but on account of the Jews who were in those places where his father was known to be a Greek. The characters of the two men stand before us also with no small distinctness; for Titus had none of the yielding and sensitive spirit of Timothy; but as he was

more mature, so was he also more courageous. Hence we find him sent to Corinth in the very critical circumstances of the church there after the apostle had written his First Epistle out of much affliction and anguish of heart with many tears. Paul had not only blamed their worldliness and carnal vanity, but had peremptorily called for the severest exercise of discipline in the case of an unclean person who stood very high in the estimate of many. He was deeply burdened in spirit and anxious about the result; so when he came to Troas for the gospel, and when a door was opened to him in the Lord, he had no relief, because he found not Titus, “my brother.” Taking his leave of them, therefore, he went off to Macedonia, which was the adjacent province; but there God that comforts the lowly comforted him by the coming of Titus, for he had learned that the Epistle had produced the happiest effects, and among the rest longing, mourning, and zeal for the apostle. The apostle therefore had the deepest joy. Their grief was according to God. It had wrought repentance to salvation never to be regretted; “earnest care, clearing of themselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what longing, yea, what zeal, yea, what avenging: in everything ye proved yourselves to be pure in the matter.” And the apostle bears witness of the joy of Titus, because his spirit had been refreshed by them all. The boasting of the apostle, as he calls it, was not put to shame, but found to be truth, and his inward affection was more abundantly towards them, while calling to mind the obedience of them all, how with fear and trembling they received him—a state of soul which grace alone produced, especially in such as the Corinthians.

And the apostle in the same Second Epistle to the Corinthians mentions his exhorting Titus, as he had made a beginning before, to complete in the Corinthians their purposed liberality towards the suffering saints in Jerusalem. So the churches of Macedonia had done, which were as poor as the Corinthian church was rich. He thanked God for putting the same earnest care for the Corinthian saints into the heart of Titus; who, being himself very earnest, went forth to them of his own accord, and with him the brother whose praise was in the gospel through all the assemblies, sent by the apostle as he was chosen by the assemblies, for the ministration of this grace. The apostle, providing things honorable, not only before the Lord but before men, avoided taking it upon himself but gladly helped it on.

It is to this servant of God, of long standing and ripe experience in the work, that the apostle now writes. For Crete had a most unenviable name in ancient times; and when the freshness of grace and truth is no longer felt, these evil characteristics are apt to rise again and display themselves. To maintain the glory of the Lord in the help and correction of the saints there, was the urgent object of the Epistle to Titus. We shall see in the detail how wisely and worthily of God this fresh design was laid on the apostle's companion and fellow-laborer on their behalf.

Titus had been already left in Crete among other things for the authoritative nomination of elders; but the Epistle itself demolishes all thought of the permanent charge of a diocesan. He was to join the apostle at Nicopolis. The statements of Eusebius and others are negatived by scripture.

Chapter 194

On Titus 1:1

“Paul, bondman of God and apostle of Jesus Christ according to [the] faith of God's elect, and full knowledge [or acknowledgment] of truth that is according to godliness” (ver. 1).

Bondman “of God” is unusual. Thus in the Epistle to the Romans it is “bondman of Jesus Christ.” So it is in the Epistle to the Philippians, where Timothy is associated with the apostle. Here alone it is “bondman of God and apostle of Jesus Christ.” No Christian ought to doubt that there is special suitability between that relationship to God, and the Epistle. “God,” as such, is prominent in all the pastoral Epistles rather than “Father,” where “bondman” could not be appropriate or rightly conceivable. Nevertheless it is only to Titus that the apostle presents himself as here he does. We may be thereby assured from this fact that it falls in with the character of the Epistle before us more even than with any other of the pastoral letters. Rom. 6 may help a little to explain why. The great truth in the latter portion of that chapter is that, though we are under grace, we are bondmen to Him whom we obey. Once alas! we were bondmen of sin; now, having got our freedom from sin, we have become bondmen to righteousness (ver. 18) and to God (ver. 22), having our fruit unto holiness and the end eternal life. A similarly fundamental depth is found in the Epistle to Titus: only here Paul predicates the term of himself, not of believers in general. If he calls himself “apostle of Jesus Christ,” he takes care previously to say that he was “bondman of God.” It was important for Titus to take heed to this. At the very outset it was a solemn reminder from the Holy Spirit. If the apostle did not often so speak, it was always true; and the expression of the truth here seems intended of God to be a fresh lesson to Titus, and the rather because in the circumstances before him it might easily be forgotten.

Titus was called to a serious but highly honorable charge. Had it been only to exercise oversight, he who aspires to that desires a good work. But Titus was called amongst other things to establish overseers: clearly a far more delicate and responsible service. Self-importance might here readily enter, as it has often done even with most excellent men. Hence the apostle, who had authorized and directed Titus in that high service, begins with the emphatic statement, “Paul, bondman of God.” All was worthless, if the will of God were not done. The Son of God shows the perfection of a life wholly devoted to that one thing, and first set it before all as a moral jewel of the highest water. In order to do His will in that perfection, He emptied Himself, taking a bondman's form, coming in the likeness of men, and, having been found in figure as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, death of the cross. In that perfection He stands alone; nevertheless He forms others according to His own blessed pattern, and none more evidently than the inspired man who now writes to Titus as “bondman of God.”

Titus was not, and could not be, like Paul, “apostle of Jesus Christ;” but was it not open to him to be, no less than the apostle, “bondman of God”? His special position was according to the will of the Lord Jesus, and he would fulfill its proper functions all the better if he valued, as the apostle did, the being “bondman of God.” His own will was thus to be forfended; and the apostle implies this in an introduction so peculiar and impressive. We may be sure that the words were not lost on

Titus, but that he laid each deeply to heart.

There is another peculiarity here which has greatly perplexed the learned. As is too usual in a difficulty, they have departed from the plain and obvious meaning of the text, not by a daring conjecture, in the way of emendation as a substitute for it, but by a version, to say the least, of an arbitrary nature, which is quite uncalled for by the context. Two of the ablest recent commentators have joined in discarding “according to,” and in adopting “for.” But this is to lose the peculiar force of the scripture before us. To be apostle of Jesus Christ “for” the faith of God's elect, is a commonplace. It is no doubt, like all such proposals, an easy way of understanding the clause; but the truth intended vanishes. “According to the faith of God's elect” has the same ground as, and no less reason than, “according to piety,” just afterward, with which these commentators do not tamper. It is safest to translate correctly, even if one is obliged to feel or own we have no exposition to offer of which we are assured. The Revisers, therefore, as well as the Authorized translators, have acted more faithfully. Very possibly they might not have been able to explain the propriety of the phrase; but at any rate they have done no violence to the text in their respective versions. They have left the word of God for others to explain in due time, according to their measure of spiritual insight.

Is then the apostolic statement so hard to be understood? Not so, if we are simple. Aaron was anointed priest according to the law. There is now an entire change—a new system, resting upon an altogether different basis. It was no longer the first man dealt with morally, or helped ceremonially. There is the Second Man, the Last Adam. Faith, therefore, is come and revealed. It is no longer a question of any being guarded under law: believing men, even of Israel, were no longer under the old tutor. Paul, the Jew, and Titus, the Gentile, are alike sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Hence Paul here describes himself as “apostle of Jesus Christ according to faith of God's elect.” The entire system of legal ordinances had come to its end; Christ had effaced it, and taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. The ancient people of God have for the time completely passed away, with all the peculiarities of their probationary status. It is now a question of what God has wrought, given, and revealed in the person of Christ; and hence, therefore, of faith on the part of God's elect. What is external in Christianity may be more or less apprehended by the world; but here the apostle points only to what is unseen and eternal, and God's elect alone enter in and enjoy. Hence we see that in this short Epistle there is more than one pithy, yet fall, exhibition of the gospel in its deep moral power; wherein it is distinguished from the two Epistles to Timothy. This is in keeping with the “faith of God's elect,” and helps to illustrate why the writer describes himself as apostle of Jesus Christ accordingly.

But he adds another particular. Paul was His apostle also according to the full knowledge or acknowledgment of truth that is according to godliness. This is the more remarkable, because we find him a few verses afterward speaking of his having left Titus in Crete to set right what was wanting, and establish elders in every city, as he had ordered him; but he in no way describes his own apostleship as being according to such a direction of authority. This authority is not to be doubted in any way, and it is of high moment in its place; but Paul characterizes it after another pattern altogether. It was “according to faith of God's elect, and knowledge of truth that is according to godliness.” Its stamp was not merely ecclesiastical but Christian, and its Christian

description is the only thing on which the apostle here insists, even when he is about to notice the charge he had given Titus for ecclesiastical order. If Christianity is bound up with the faith of God's elect, it is for that very reason also with “knowledge of truth that is according to godliness.” “The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ.” Shadows and outward observances are now treated as vain. The body is of Christ. The truth must be known by faith, and that truth is according to godliness, else the apostle would have disowned it as having no living link with Christ.

Chapter 195

On Titus 1:2-3

The apostle pursues what has been already begun in describing his mission. It was in hope of life eternal which God that cannot lie promised before the times of the ages, but manifested in its own seasons His word in a preaching, with which he was entrusted, according to our Savior God (ver. 2, 3).

Life eternal is really given to the believer now; and this is a revelation by no means uncommon in the writings of our apostle. Its present possession is emphatically prominent in the writings of John, whether the Gospel or his First Epistle. But Paul frequently treats it according to its future display, as in the synoptic Gospels. In one well-known passage of his, Rom. 6:22, 23, we have both:" Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end life everlasting. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Here he describes his apostolic work or message as conditioned by the hope of life everlasting. It is wholly different from the expectations of the most pious Jew in Old Testament times, being grounded in the main on the promises of God the Father. If a prophet spoke of eternal life at all, it was bound up with the future kingdom of the Messiah. Under His scepter the Israelite looked for every outward blessing, for all honor and power as well as goodness from God, for the display of beneficence and of blessing in every form; and all this will surely be accomplished on earth, without fail or stint, according to the word of the living God. The apostle's work had a wholly different character, based upon the total rejection and the heavenly exaltation of the Lord Jesus, whereby that hope of life eternal is realized now, and in a way altogether superior to the testimony of the prophets (Psa. 133, Dan. 12). For he proceeds to show that the promise which the Christian actually enjoys, goes not merely beyond the prophets, or the human race on earth, but back into eternity. This was necessarily a promise within the Godhead. The God that knew no falsehood promised it before the times of the ages. So we saw in 2 Tim. 1:9, that God saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace that was given us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages.

These times, stamped with distinctive principles on God's part, are occupied with the history of man's trial and failure in every form. First we see him innocent and in paradise, with everything good around him, and put to the simplest test of obedience in a single, and in itself slight, exception. This was enough: man fell, not deceived like the woman, but ensnared through her in known deliberate transgression. Was man any better when an outcast left to himself, with the sentence of death before him? "And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Therefore was man with the lower creation swept away from the earth. A spared remnant passed through the deluge in God's mercy, and the earth came under new conditions; for the sword of government was now instituted of God. After a vain attempt by unity to make a name forever in the tower of Babel, God scattered them after their families and tongues in their lands and their nations. Then, when idolatry had overspread the earth, by promise was man called and chosen and separated

unto God in the person of Abraham and his descendants. But even when they reaped the blessing by God's deliverance from oppressing Egypt, they did not appreciate the riches of divine favor. Therefore, when God at Sinai proposed blessing on the condition of their own obedience, the people unanimously answered, “All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.” On such a ground sinful man cannot stand. “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight.” Law may give knowledge of sin, never power against it. “The strength of sin is the law,” says our apostle (1 Cor. 15:56).

Hence justification is gratuitous by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Therefore, says he elsewhere (Gal. 3:10), “As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.” A statement of uncommon force; not as many as have broken the law, but as many as stand on that ground or principle. “For it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the law for to do them.” Now this is written in Deut. 27., in which chapter the facts stated are as striking as the words of the apostle to the Galatians. For Moses charged the people to stand, six tribes upon mount Gerizim to bless them, and six upon mount Ebal to curse; but in the sequel of the chapter we have the curses carefully recorded, which the Levites were to say to all the men of Israel, without one word of provision for the blessing! “As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.” There is no blessing provided or possible on that footing. It is those that are of faith who are blessed, none others. “And the law is not of faith.” It works wrath and a curse: not that the law is not righteous, for the commandment is holy, just, and good. “The law entered by the bye that the offense might abound.” Sin was long before the law; but the law made its evil plain and inexcusable.

So the prophets, who exposed the growing wickedness of Israel, and even of favored Judah, kept thundering in their ears, whilst they ever reminded them of their only hope in the coming Messiah, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to those that believe. At length, when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law. But the Jews refused Him, yea abhorred Him; so that His staff, Beauty, was cut asunder that He might break His covenant which He had made with all the peoples. For how could there he the predicted gathering, or obedience, of the peoples unto Him, if His own received Him not? They did worse; they weighed for His price thirty pieces of silver, and the field of the potter became the field of blood, Aceldama. Then His other staff, even Bands, was cut asunder, that He might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. The last link was broken in the cross of the Lord Jesus, even for the two houses of Israel. But sovereign grace through that very cross laid a foundation for an entirely new work, of which the Son of man, exalted at the right hand of God in heaven, is the author and crown. While Israel and the nations wholly disappear for all that was predicted of earthly blessing and glory, the Head of the new creation is revealed on high, and the Holy Ghost sent below, and a door of mercy lies open to every believer on terms of indiscriminate grace. This is Christianity for the individual. Along with it goes that new building of God, the church, the body of Christ.

Thus we see that what the God incapable of falsehood promised before the times of the ages, now shines upon the believer. What was first in purpose was last in accomplishment. Here, however, it is not purpose so much as “life eternal” which comes before us. “This life is in His Son.” There is no such life in any other. The first Adam was at best but a living soul; the last Adam a quickening Spirit. As Christ our life is risen from the dead, such is the character of the life we receive in Him. It

is life after redemption was effected, that those who are quickened together with Him might have all their offenses forgiven, dead with Christ and risen with Him, and even, as the Epistle to the Ephesians adds, seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Here, however, the apostle does not dwell so much on heavenly association as on the wondrous fact that the life of the Christian is life eternal, promised before the world began, outside of times or dispensations in God's dealings with man on the earth. It derives its character from Him Who is eternal, The Way and the Truth, the Head, center, expression, and object of all the purposes of God. This we have now, as we shall have it in glory with Himself.

Nor is there anything vague or uncertain. It is not a law requiring what at best may, yea must, fail of fulfillment, as failure is invariable in man's hand. It is God's word manifested in a preaching which had His authority made good by His truth, the sure revelation of His mind. “We are of God (said another apostle): he that knoweth God heareth us.” Not to hear is the spirit of error. During man's probation, law put him to the proof characteristically. Now God manifested His word in its own seasons. There was a divine work to speak of.

Now, therefore, is the due time for bringing all out. “In its own seasons He manifested His word in a preaching, wherewith I was entrusted according to the command of God our Savior.” This is the “mystery of the gospel” (Eph. 6:19); at least it is a part, and an important part, of it. Ever since the apostle was sent forth on his mission, the greatest impulse was given, and that full development which we have written in his Epistles. It was embodied in Christ, Who died, rose, and was glorified in heaven; but the Holy Spirit was given in order that God's word as to this might be manifested; and manifested it was in Paul's preaching beyond all others, “according to command of God our Savior.” For never did this title “Savior God” before receive such an illustration; never again can it be after such a sort, even when the glory shall be a defense, a cloud of smoke by day, and a shining flame by night, upon every dwelling place, upon Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies. And it is all the more glorious, because it is a secret known only to faith, and preached therefore, instead of being established in power and visible display. Therefore is it now a “commandment of God our Savior.” When glory dwells in the land of Israel, as it surely will under Messiah and the new covenant literally enjoyed by the earthly people, there will be no room for any such commandment. It will then be the day for the triumph of the most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, on the downfall of Satan's power.

On Titus 1:4-6

The address follows:-" To Titus, genuine child according to a common faith: grace and peace from God [the] Father and Christ Jesus our Savior" (ver. 4).

Thus we see the apostle gives Titus the same designation as Timothy in his First Epistle, but there it is simply "in faith "; here it is "according to common faith." They both believed the same truth of Christ, Paul the Jew and Titus the Gentile. It is not only that there is one body, the church, but a faith common to all Christians, common to the highest in spiritual place, power, and authority, with the least saint, were he a Scythian or a slave, that calls on the same Lord rich in grace toward all that call on His name.

But it will be observed, that Timothy is called "beloved child" in chap. 1 of the Second Epistle. Accordingly the apostle unbosoms himself to him as he does not to Titus. Nevertheless Titus thoroughly possessed his confidence, as he was entrusted with the important and delicate task of an apostolic envoy in Crete. It is the mistake of the old divines to confound this position with the gift of an evangelist, perhaps because Timothy was an evangelist. This Titus is never called. The truth is that the charge over doctrine, or the commission to appoint elders, is quite independent of an evangelist's gift. Titus had here a work within the church, not without; though no doubt an evangelist might also be appointed to such a charge by an apostle. But an ecclesiastic charge and the exercise of an evangelistic gift have a wholly distinct character, and in themselves no single link of connection. They might or might not be united in the same person.

According to the oldest MSS. and Versions, "mercy" is omitted in the verse, but Chrysostom is quite wrong, followed by Damascus, in asserting that "mercy" is only spoken of in 1 Tim. 1:2, for it is equally found in 2 Tim. 1:2. Here also Lachmann stands with the Received Text in giving it as found in the mass of the junior MSS. and Versions supported by the Alexandrian, and a few other uncial copies.

It is difficult however to resist the overwhelming external evidence; and the inference would be, that the apostle's heart was drawn out to desire mercy especially for Timothy, whilst he contented himself with the wish for "grace and peace" in Titus' case, as he commonly did in writing to the saints generally. In the Epistle of Jude "mercy" is put in the foreground, with "peace and love" following, for those addressed on the broadest possible ground. This insertion is quite as exceptional for the saints in general, as the omission of it is to Titus. There saints are regarded as the objects of special tenderness, as they were exposed to the most imminent danger, from the growing rush of evil towards the last gulf of apostacy. But if "mercy" is not here expressly before us, "grace" really implies it; for it is the fountain-head from which mercy flows, and peace is the issue ever to be desired, no less than the ever-flowing fountain, "from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Savior."

"For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest order further the things wanting, and appoint elders city by city, as I directed thee. If any one is blameless (or unaccused), husband of

one wife, having children faithful, not under charge of profligacy, or unruly" (ver 5, 6).

There is no doubt that the apostle left Titus in Crete only for a time in the fulfillment of the charge given him. There is not a hint of his permanent residence there, but plain proof that he was to leave Crete for other quarters and different work. It is remarkable that the form of the word "left" has been changed from rather earlier days; and that this change falls in with permanence. So it stands in the commonly received text; but the best authorities followed by the critics agree that the original form quite coincides with the temporary character of the mission of Titus. The apostle's stay in the island was brief. Titus was left there for a while. Neither is said to have planted the gospel in Crete. It seems highly probable from Acts 2:11, that the glad tidings had been conveyed there almost from the great day of Pentecost. It was a question therefore of Titus' following up that setting of things in order which the apostle began. Even at Rome we learn from the first chapter of the Epistle that Paul longed to see them, that he might communicate some spiritual gift to them, in order to their strengthening. Still more would this be called for in the far less frequented island where Titus was left. There would be things wanting which the short stay of the apostle could not suffice to complete. Further, there was the need of elders to be appointed, which was regularly, and sometimes long, subsequent to the gathering of the saints. It is implied that several cities, perhaps many, had assemblies in them, and that elders were to be appointed in each. Bp. Ellicott is quite right in questioning the statement of Jer. Taylor, "one in one city, many in many" (Episc. § 15). It is a strange, as well as certainly a precarious, statement from an Episcopalian, though natural enough to one of dissenting ideas. There is nothing here to limit eldership to one person in each

city. There may have been several. This would of course be modified by circumstances; but we know from elsewhere in the New Testament that plurality of elders in any given assembly was the rule, and so no doubt it was at Crete. Church order, though flexible, had a common principle and character. "For this cause," says the apostle to the Corinthians, "have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you to remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere, in every church" (1 Cor. 4:17, compare 1 Cor. 11:16; 14:33-37).

It should be observed, as a consideration of the greatest moment, that the apostle does not specify a particular gift as requisite for these local charges. Scripture takes marked care to guard from that dangerous confusion, which was soon to characterize Christendom, and to form the separation of clergy from laity which is in fact a return to Judaism, and a denial in both principle and practice of the distinctive fullness of privilege to the church. It is not that a gift and a charge might not be combined in the same individual; but they are in themselves, and for most who have the one or the other, altogether different. The gift was one given by Christ to the church and from the greatest to the least, apart from all intervention of man. This can no more cease to be than Christ can abnegate His grace and living functions as the Head of the body.

Another weighty fact is that, so far from being interrupted by His ascension to heaven, Eph. 4:8-10 is precisely authoritative, that only from Him on high were they given, and given till we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. As no right-minded Christian will aver that this is attained yet, so neither should he doubt the unfailing grace of Christ. Power in external testimony

may not adorn the assembly when unfaithful, and no more a visible united light as once here below. But the love of Christ cannot refuse all that is needed for the perfecting of the saints, unto ministerial work, unto building up of His body.

But elders or bishops were a local charge and depended for their nomination on those who had discernment to choose and authorize, ultimately from Christ, to appoint them. Hence we never see them in scripture, among the Gentiles at least, save as chosen by apostles, or by apostolic men like Timothy or Titus expressly commissioned to that end. The democratic idea is a fiction; had it been of God, it would have saved much trouble, and simplified matters outwardly, to have left their election with the assembly. But it is never so heard of in God's word. All power and authority is in the hands of Christ, Who wielded it through those He chose. Hence He called personally the twelve on earth, as He called Paul from heaven; and they did directly, or indirectly through fitting agents as here before us, choose elders assembly by assembly, city by city. The assembly might look out deacons; but elders needed and had a different source, the authority of Christ through men whom He chose and fitted to select them. How solemn a consideration this is, alike for Nationalists and Non-conformists, this is not the place to discuss at large. If they are spiritual and of single eye, they can scarce fail to see how far present arrangements are alien from scripture, how fallen the church is if it were only in the matter of gifts and charges. Alas! it is but a particular case of a ruin far more comprehensive and appalling.

Moral qualities and circumstances in accordance with them are here as elsewhere insisted on for elders. “If any one is blameless (or unaccused).” How censure others, if open to it himself? “Husband of one wife.” If married, he must have but one wife; for many heathen had several and at one time; and Jews discarded a wife with facility when they liked another more. “Having children faithful, not under charge of excess (or profligacy), or unruly.” Next to personal probity stands family relationship; and as plurality of wives would bar, whatever the suitability in other respects, so a disreputable offspring. How could he rule the house of God, who had already and manifestly failed in his own home?

Chapter 197

On Titus 1:7-9

The characteristics required for the office are now set out. “For the bishop (or overseer) must be blameless (or free from accusation), as God's steward; not self-willed, not passionate, not quarelsome (lit. remaining over wine), not a striker, not a seeker of base lucre; but hospitable, a lover of good, sober-minded, just, holy, temperate, holding to the faithful word that is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to encourage with sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers” (ver. 7-9).

It is plain that there would be no force in the reason thus alleged, if “the bishop” and “the elder” were not identical. Titus was to appoint elders in every city as the apostle charged him: “if any man is blameless, &c., for the bishop must be blameless,” &c. Hence the Episcopalian is obliged to give up his idea that the bishop and elders in scripture represent two orders of officials, and driven to look for the prototype of the modern diocesan in such an one as Titus. But the Epistle itself, and other scriptures, refute the supposition of any such permanent functionary, though Titus did appoint elders in Crete.

The elder is expressive of the dignity of the person derived from the respect due to age; not that the elder must needs be an aged man, but one of experience. Thus the title was derived and applied even if there was no great age, where suitability for the position existed. The bishop, or overseer, expresses rather the nature of the office, which was to take account morally of the saints, and to maintain godly order. Oversight in short was the constant duty privately and publicly.

Hence it was a primary requisite that the overseer should himself be blameless, or free from charge against him, as God's steward. He had a governing post, and a moral responsibility therein to God. The apostle in 1 Cor. 4:1 speaks of himself and of his fellow-laborers as “stewards of God's mysteries.” Here we find no mysteries referred to. These were not the sacraments so called, but the new and hitherto secret truths of the New Testament revelation. Yet the elder, or overseer, might not be a teacher; still less did he stand in the higher place of apostle or prophet. Nevertheless he must be “apt to teach,” as we shall see confirmed ere long in this very context, though not possessed of the teacher's distinct gift. But whatever his duty, he must act as God's steward, manifestly identified with the interests of His house. This would give seriousness of purpose, as it supposes moral courage with men and dependence on God and His word.

He must be “not self-willed,” or headstrong. It is the grossest mistake that self-will implies courage, though it may lead to rashness or even recklessness. Nothing gives so much quiet firmness as the consciousness of doing the will of God. One can then be lowly and patient, but uncompromising. Again, he must be “not soon angry” or passionate. Scarce anything enfeebles authority more than proneness to the explosions of anger. The weight of a rebuke, however just it might be, is apt to be lost when a man is overcome with passion. Calmness gives weight and force to a needed rebuke.

The next negation is perhaps a figurative expression; literally it means not abiding long over wine or disorderly through it. Hence it comes generally to mean, “not a brawler.” Even were a Christian

free from the suspicion of so evil a source, the easily heated character is unfit to be, and unworthy of being, God's steward. The overseer must be no brawler.

If this refers rather to spirit and words, the next goes further down; he is to be “no striker.” Here there is a still less seemly violence, the one very naturally leading to the other. The overseer must be neither.

There is another characteristic which men in authority are not a little apt to fall into, but it is not to be in an overseer —he must not seek gain by base means, he must not yield to greed of filthy lucre. He who is called to rule before God among the saints must himself watch at least as much against this debasing evil as against those of violence.

How blessed the contrast with all these uncomely traits we see in Christ! And if every Christian is called to be Christ's epistle, how much more are the elders? How could one, known to fail or tamper with any of these things, reprove the failure of others as he ought?

The absence of evil qualities is not enough. The assembly of God is the only sphere on earth for the exercise and display of that which is divine. To steer clear, therefore, of the ordinary snares of men in office never could satisfy the mind of God. The overseer, without a thought of invitation or recompence in return, was called to be hospitable, and we know from other scriptures that this was not to be exercised after the manner of men but according to faith. So in the Epistle to the Hebrews the saints in general were called not to be forgetful of hospitality, for by it some have entertained angels unawares. It was not, therefore on the ground of previous knowledge, or of social equality. Had there been suspicion of a stranger, assuredly it would have excluded all such entertainment. So in faith and love Abraham received into hospitality, not angels only, but the Lord God Himself, in the form of man. Hospitality like this was not to be laid on the shelf, or vainly admired as a patriarchal virtue. Beyond question the overseer was not to be behind the saints in general, but to be given to hospitality. Nor this only, but “a lover of good,” not merely of good men, but of goodness—an important guard in the exercise of much more than hospitality. Self-pleasing might readily enter otherwise; and the indulgence of self ever is the service of Satan. Christ alone shows us truly and fully what good is, and makes it not only attractive but of power for the spirit and the walk. The overseer therefore was to be a “lover of good.”

Further, he was to be discreet or sober-minded. A man might easily carry the love of good into either a sentiment or an enthusiasm; but the Spirit of God gives sobriety. He is “a Spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind.” Thus is everything kept in its true place, because all is seen and weighed in the presence of God.

Hence the overseer was to be “just;” he must rightly estimate the relationship of others and his own: a most important element, not merely in a general way, but especially for one in his place. Nothing would more enfeeble his weight than a failure in righteousness. Yet to be “just” is not enough. It is of course imperative; but there must be more along with it. The overseer must be “pious,” or “holy” in that sense, “■σιος:.” It is not separate from evil, but gracious and upright, and is so used particularly of Christ in the Old Testament, as well as in the New. It is that character of piety which appreciates God's mercy, and is itself merciful. This was looked for in an elder, while he and all believers were arm or saints. Further, he was to be “temperate,” an expression much narrowed and so far misapplied in our day. Self-control not in one respect but in all is its real

meaning.

These are the moral qualities which the Spirit of God insists on for elders, positively as well as negatively. But there is an addition of great value in verse 9, “Holding to the faithful word according to the teaching, that he may be able both to encourage (or exhort) in sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers.”

Here the necessary aptness to teach appears in the peculiar and twofold obligation for which it was required. It might not be formal ministry in the assembly; the work of the elder lay as much, or perhaps even more, with the wants and dangers of individual saints in daily life. Such an one must adhere firmly to the faithful word. Uncertainty in his own perception of it, uncertainty in his handling it for others, would altogether undermine the task laid on him to execute. The elder was not however to act according to his own wisdom; nor did his authority spring from himself, any more than from those that composed the assembly. He was God's steward, and the Holy Ghost made him an overseer, not in a mere flock of his own, “my people,” as men say, “but in the flock of God.” The faithful word, therefore, must be his standard, as well as the source from which he drew whatever material he used; and this not to nourish questions or indulge imagination, “but according to truth and love.” If he was a man in authority, so was he a man under authority. He was God's steward, that God's will might be done and the will of man repressed. God is not the author of confusion but of peace, Who will have all things done decently and in order. Thus the light of the faithful word must guide the elder and indeed the Christian. The teaching he was himself taught can alone determine what that order is; and now it is permanently in scripture. To that faithful word of God, therefore, the overseer must cling, avoiding strange notions as poison. Nor was it for his own guidance only. The elders were to rule, and, as made such by the Holy Spirit, were solemnly responsible to “rule well.” But if such were to be accounted worthy of double honor, it was especially true of those who labored in the word and in teaching (1 Tim. 5:17), as some might if not all.

Now in the conflict of circumstances which would come necessarily before the overseer, there are two wants constantly claiming his care—as well the need to encourage some, as no less the need to reprove gainsayers. Hence says the apostle in this passage, “That he may be able both to exhort (or comfort) with sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers.” For both a single eye is needed; but the faithful word is the means or weapon of all moment, sharper than any two-edged sword, which can divide as well as wound. On the overseer would fall this duty from time to time, and the faithful word alone would enable him both to encourage with sound doctrine, and to expose those who sought their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 198

On Titus 1:10-14

In the later Epistles it is a sorrowful feature to observe how evil grows apace in the church of God. It had entered early, though apostolic vigilance and power held it in check; but it had never and nowhere entirely disappeared. Our Lord had prepared us for this, not as a question of fellowship for the church, but where the word of the gospel is sown in the world; for “the field,” as He interprets it, is the world. In that field tares were sown early by the enemy, and Christ's servants were forbidden to root them out. This, from their prejudices as Jews, they would have been too ready to attempt; but the Lord lets them know that in the field wheat and tares, however sad their mixture, were to grow together until the harvest. It is for angelic hands to deal with the tares when judgment comes. This is the day of grace not of judgment. The servants of the Lord are to sow the good, not to essay the extermination of evil from the world. To root up the tares would be death at least. This, on the one hand, the false church avowedly executes in open disobedience of the Lord. On the other, discipline in the true church, even to putting away, is according to the Lord's will. Indeed the church ceases to be the church where that unalienable obligation is declined. The Gospel of Matthew (chap. 13) and the First Epistle to the Corinthians (chap. 5) are in perfect harmony; but they refer to wholly distinct things. Wicked professors are to be put away from among the saints; they are not to be hurried out of the world. This the Lord preserves for the angels in the time of harvest, the end of the age. It is now sowing time, and the day of salvation. The judgment will fall by-and-by unsparingly; as grace should now reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. So it has reigned in the mighty work of redemption; so it ought to reign in the practical answer of the saints, individually or together.

It remains however that gainsaying abounds, the dark shadow which followed closely the glad tidings of God. “For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who overthrow houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake” (ver. 10,11).

This we see even before the apostle's service closed. There were already “many” of these disorderly men. Whatever discipline might have done to clear the Lord's name, and safeguard the saints from corruption, this scandal abounded. It was a bitter sorrow for the heart of him who was soon to depart and be with Christ; and the more so, when he thought of the church, the beloved of Christ, so exposed to the attacks and wiles of the enemy. If grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, there were many now who bore His name whose speech was vanity, not to edification, whose aim was their belly, not to serve the Lord Jesus; nor did they merely foam out their own shame, but deceived people's minds. They led away the unguarded and self-confident, even where there might be life Godward. Still more did they hurry on to destruction the borderers whose ear is ever open to that which accredits man, in ignorance of the truth of God which lays him in the dust.

These unruly persons were “specially of the circumcision.” From without probably, yet more than the heathen had they knowledge of scripture, of course only of the Old Testament.

They were therefore quick to take the place of being a guide to the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes. They had in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth. But if the name of God had been blasphemed among the Gentiles because of mere Jews who assumed the place of spiritual understanding, how much more was it about to be by the self-honor, of these “many” men who were not circumcised only, but baptized also! The apostle declares to Titus that they must have their mouths stopped. This of course could not be brought to pass by outward authority, but by the power of the word wielded in the Spirit. Titus seems one eminently suited for this work of vindicating God and His truth; as God would use his example and that of all who in faith act upon the apostle's word. Easy tolerance of evil may imitate grace, but is its shame and utter destruction. Grace maintains and is inseparable from the truth; otherwise it is no more grace, but a sham of good yet real evil, which demoralizes, corrupts, and destroys. It is not only that God is dishonored, but whole houses are subverted. This expression is morally important, “whole houses.” It might be through the head of the house, whose faith was undermined, and whose ways were made loose. What havoc to the family! and the more surely, if some or many of the household were unconverted. But even where all were converted, what a danger for them all! So much easier is it in this world to spread evil than to maintain what is good and true and holy.

No doubt the ways of these troublers were unruly; but evil teaching is still more pernicious, as it habitually clothes itself in thoughts which flatter human nature. Christ is not in it, Who is the life and nourishment of all who are born again. But these men were teaching things which ought not to be taught; and their aim was filthy lucre, not the glory of the Lord, but that which, as means or end, becomes an idol that tolerates lust and iniquity.

Evils are not everywhere the same; certain times and places have a character peculiar to themselves. The Cretans had an ill repute beyond most, and this not merely with strangers, who might regard them with scanty affection, but even among their own countrymen, usually apt to be somewhat prone to indulgence of faults. So “One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies' (i.e., gluttons). This testimony is true; for which cause rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men turning away from the truth” (ver. 12-14).

The apostle here quotes an ethic poet, Epimenides of Crete, in order the more to enforce the confessed dangers of those concerned. It is not to be supposed that he endorses him, this Gentile writer, as a prophet of God. It was needful therefore to add, “This testimony is true.” But it does show how grace condescends to use whatever is true, though the source might be impure. In the same spirit the apostle cited a celebrated comedian the more impressively to convict the Corinthians: “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” And if a heathen not particularly circumspect over himself or in his plays, gave utterance to a sentiment so applicable to the danger at Corinth, it was the more severe a reproof from such a mouth to the careless saints there. Their levity deceived them; even Menander reproved them. So here one of themselves, a prophet of their own, as a heathen moralist, gave a true witness to the unreliable character, the mischievous activity, and the lazy self-indulgence of Cretans as such. Natural character may be nothing for the life of faith: the Spirit of God works all that is good through Christ presented to the soul, as an object of faith, and spring of love, and giver of joy; but it is an important matter for the enemy, who skillfully acts upon the old man, if unjudged to the Lord's dishonor. Where there is unwatchfulness,

a fall ensues. Therefore the evil nature affords constant danger. When Christ is really leaned on and looked to, the Holy Spirit gives entire superiority over evil. Here it is a question of those who are walking after the flesh: hence the humbling testimony is applied in all its force. Titus did well to bear it in mind; nor could a Cretan well complain of the apostle's severity, where an eminent countryman of theirs had long since owned their local character. “For which cause rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound (or healthy) in the faith.”

Pravity of conduct habitually flows from something unsound creeping into the spirit. To be unsound in the faith is the high road to unholy ways. Here too we find the perverseness of Jewish fables. It had appeared even then, and undoubtedly long before. Religions imagination has wrought since to the incalculable evil of those that bear the name of the Lord. But there is more than “fable” to watch against, even “commandments of men turning away from the truth.” Never trust the practical exhortation or the moral way of those who, having professed the truth, have turned from it. There is no greater evil ordinarily in Christendom. It has an apostate character. For God's word will never mingle with man's commandments: where it is essayed, in the long run the human element really prevails, and the divine becomes a powerless form.

Chapter 199

On Titus 1:15-16

We have to do with the truth, not with fable; and we are under grace, not under commandment of men alienated from the truth. Neither imagination nor human morality can mingle with Christian revelation. Scripture alone furnishes a bright sense of its living relationships and its glorious prospects, with which fable and “the unspiritual” mind can never compare. Nor can human commandments rise above their source; they are of the world, and therefore perishable. The word of the Lord abides forever, and judges alike both fable and human commandment. “To the pure all things [are] pure; but to the defiled and unbelieving [is] nothing pure; but both the mind and the conscience are defiled” (ver.15).

Duty depends upon relationship, and relationship on the revelation of God in Christ our life. Otherwise we are only in our sins. Such once were we all—not all gross, nor all externally shameful, such were some; but now through grace we were washed, but we were sanctified, but we were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God. Such is the source of Christian purity; and it is so much the more truly ours, because it is of God Who, as He has called, will also keep His own, through our Lord Jesus—loved in the world, and loved unto the end. To such all things are pure, because they themselves are pure. It is no question now of abstinence from this or that; of allowance of legal sanctity; of fleshly uncleanness. The will of God as expressed by His word directs the believer, as we see its perfection in the Lord Jesus. This is the true rule of life. Without Christ there can be nothing but a rule of death. And to the defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure. What was forbidden provoked the flesh to desire it. Stolen waters were sweet; and so it is still where Christ is unknown. Nothing is pure to the defiled and unbelieving, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled: an awful sentence morally, but most true. It is not only that their lower nature is corrupt, but the highest part of them, even that which ought to bring in good, and presumes to discuss divine things and God Himself, is wholly defiled. Religion in such a condition is at least as impure and profane as anything else.

It will be said, no doubt, that such persons know not God. This is undoubtedly true. They know neither the Father, nor Jesus Christ Whom He has sent; yet they may, or even do, profess to own God, as men now in Christendom, save the openly profane and unbelieving. “They profess to know God; but in works they deny [Him], being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (ver. 16). This alas! is not religions progress. The germ of it was even then in apostolic days. The fruit abounds everywhere in our day; and it will be found advancing more and more to greater ungodliness. For their word will spread as a gangrene. It suits the fallen nature of man. His pride is pampered by it, and his will delights in it. Departure from the will of God in a moral way prepared for the gradual rejection of all revelation; for men are ashamed to profess what they evidently hate, as well as what condemns them. God's word sanctifies. It judges the will of man, as well as all its outward workings and effects. It brings in God and His will, which grace makes the directory and food and joy of the new man. Instead of this Satan presents fable on the one hand and commandments of man on the other, which shut out conscience as well as God Himself.

It is evident that these instructions of the apostle are in full accordance with the teaching of the Master in Matt. 15, especially ver. 10-20; Luke 6:40-45; 11:34-44, and elsewhere. Christianity in the practical sense works outwardly from within: unless the soul be purified in obeying the truth, as with all that believe, there is neither the Father's name hallowed, nor sin truly judged, nor unfeigned love of the brethren. Neither can there be the worship of God in spirit and truth, any more than drawing near to the Father. All must be superficial and of the natural man. There can be nothing divine till one is born of the Spirit; whereas the gospel carries the soul, in the sense of God's favor in Christ, far beyond into peace, liberty, and power. For Christ is not only life, but the Deliverer in the fullest sense, as He is the revealed object before the soul from first to last.

Thus He, the unchanging One, changes all things for us; and if any one is in Christ, it is a new creation: old things have passed away, behold, all things are become new; and all the things are of the God Who reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. Such is the nature, such the character and ways of, God as He has now made Himself known to us in the gospel. How hateful to Him, and ungrateful in man, and base and rebellions in itself, to turn back from a revelation, so wondrous and blessed and complete, to the beggarly elements of Judaism, yea lower still, to the filthy defiling puddle of human fable and commandments! It is man's religion using as much, or rather as little, of God's word as snits the deadly deceiver, who is behind it all, and avails himself of that little in order to claim divine authority and avoid the reproach of slighting the revelation of grace and truth in Christ the Lord. But the pure in heart, as they shall see God, are enabled to discern present dishonor done to His word, His Son, and the mighty work of redemption, before the light of which these religions efforts and vanities of men flee away as darkness before the day.

We are not in this immediate context directed to the person of Him who makes all this folly and evil manifest; nor have we dogmatic unfolding of the gospel; but grand moral principles of the utmost moment are laid down. There is room for all, but each in its season, as God is pleased to suit His word to every one who hears the Shepherd's voice. “To the pure all things are pure.” How plain and assuring to those who are subject to the Lord! How vain, in presence of such a declaration, to say that “the church” forbids flesh to be eaten on a Friday or in Lent! The value of a real fast is not denied thereby, but this is of grace in presence of adequate passing occasion; and never in the New Testament a general law, still less the sham of eating fish or eggs. Scripture, however, goes farther still, and, not content with maintaining the holy liberty of the Christian, denounces solemnly those who would infringe it. “But to the defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but both the mind and the conscience are defiled.” Having part neither in divine nature nor in divine light, to which they plainly prefer human thoughts, feelings, and authority, they necessarily become a prey to the enemy whose malicious pleasure it is to dishonor God in man's dark and alien ways. Defilement accordingly taints every spring of inward and moral affection, as it pervades their entire life, be they or not openly corrupt, or at any rate unbelieving.

It is in vain to boast in such a state of knowing God: as the Jews did of old, so do the superstitious now; but they alike prove the unreality of their boast, because “in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.” Hypocrisy, or at the least self-deception, is the inevitable result of their false position and state. The pretension to extraordinary holiness which essays to exalt self by ignorantly slighting

God's creatures, instead of using them holily and thankfully to His glory, opens the door to Satan who drags such into all defilement of flesh and spirit, yea into abominations contrary to nature itself. Estranged from the truth and grace of God, and abandoned to self, what hope can there be of repentance? What more terrible moral sentence than what the apostle pronounces, “unto every good work reprobate” ?

Chapter 200

On Titus 2:1-2

In contrast with the injurious and profane trash, of which we have been just warned, the apostle now exhorts his trusted child and fellow-servant, and enters into details which we may profitably follow with all care. “But speak thou the things which become sound teaching: that the elder men be sober, grave, discreet, sound in faith, in love, in patience” (ver. 1, 2).

Scripture leaves no room for the thought that the saints need not diligent instruction. We learn what value for the apostle there is in continual exhortation. No doubt we have to distinguish between the sound doctrine and the things which become it. All right practice flows from divine principle; and all divine principles are concentrated in the person of Christ. He therefore is and must be the substance, the exemplar, and the test; as He is the object set before us as well as the life we have, and the nourishment of that life. For this very reason does the apostle urge fidelity on Titus. If he was steward of God's mysteries for the saints, he was no less to be a watchman on God's behalf. He was therefore to speak what befitted sound doctrine. This he could not do without Christ continually before his own eyes; nor would any profit as they ought without. Christ before theirs. There may be certain truths peculiar to certain times and seasons; but Christ is always in season; and, without giving Him His due place and connection withal, truth at any time is apt to fall flat, and, such is the infirmity of man, may sometimes work dangerously. His grace is sufficient as for the soul, so also for the servant; if he needs it for himself, he needs it for his ministry not a whit less.

Titus then was here enjoined by the apostle to speak the things which become sound doctrine. Exhortation should ever follow teaching, as it flows from the same source, and needs to be continually fed with the fresh streams of truth. It will be observed that the word is not exactly “teach,” but “speak thou the things,” &c. The work of Titus was largely pastoral; and a vast deal of a pastor's work lies in speaking face to face with the objects of his care. This does not at all supersede the value of public teaching, on the one hand; but, on the other, teaching in public will never supply adequately all that every day's need requires. How many things may be happily nipped in the bud, which else would threaten danger to souls! Taken early a kindly word may suffice; and what stimulus may be given by a few cheering words, where a soul might other wise hesitate and in time turn aside. How much instruction also may be given individually, and with far greater impressiveness than in the general exhortations of public addresses! Again, how few there are who know how to speak privately in accordance with their sound teaching! No doubt there may be legalism and a continual effort to preach in private as well as in public; but how happy when without restraint, and in unaffected love, there is fidelity everywhere, and the words at home are at least consistent with what has been heard in the congregation.

It is evident therefore that the language of the Epistle to Titus here is large enough to take in his service both privately and publicly, “but speak thou the things which become sound teaching.” Another element has to be taken into account. The special relations of those that are addressed themselves are not an unimportant consideration for a servant of the Lord. And we learn how

careful is the apostle as to the befitting ways of those who are mutually related in the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians; as we see in the First Epistle of Peter with rather less prominence. Where mutual duties are pressed, the lesser or more subject relationship is regularly introduced before the greater. Thus the apostle exhorts wives before husbands, children before parents, and servants before masters. And this was done, one need not hesitate to say, in the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. For even supposing that the more authoritative relation were to blame, how important that the subject one should feel and act aright before God! “A soft answer turneth away wrath.” Nor is anything more comely than the incorruptible pearl of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

Here to Titus the charge is different, and as proper in its own place. The apostle began with the aged or elder men. The first duty laid down is, that they be temperate or “sober.” If this became any Christian, the lack of it is serious in an elderly man: he above all should set an example of that moderation in spirit and conduct which bespeaks circumspectness and sense of the presence of God. One can understand how the inexperienced mind of youth may break forth into extravagance of thought or conduct; but such a fault sits peculiarly ill on a man of years, even if he be not old in the knowledge of the Lord. Retrospect should not have been without effect now that he does know Him in the light of God.

But besides sobriety aged men should be “grave.” It is not only that experience may be turned to the account of sobriety, but to an aged Christian things around, things before, ought surely to be viewed with no levity but with seriousness, as we now look upon the things, not that are seen but, unseen and eternal.

Then, again, Titus was to see that aged men be “discreet” or “sober-minded.” Their position would give them a certain weight, unless there were painful incongruity in their ways and spirit. There are continual perplexities that appear in the practical life of Christians. Discretion therefore is specially needed, and in none so much as an elderly man; who, if he lack the energy of youth, is expected to show discrimination in the conflicting circumstances of intercourse one with another.

Farther, they were to be “sound in faith.” It is very far from being enough that one know the Lord. It is well to be exercised in mind about the truth generally, but that very exercise exposes to mistaken thoughts, unless there be a single eye in looking to the Lord, and vigilance over one's own ideas. Neither is it safe to set the mind on, however one may respect, this favorite teacher, or that, among uninspired men. The word is the great safeguard, but the word sought into as a revelation of Christ to the soul. Where this is done prayerfully, there will be soundness in faith; where man is trusted (whether self, or a leader, or a party), error is not far off. For God is jealous of a rival and will never endorse our leaning on the creature. He will have us to walk by faith, not by sight.

Nor is it enough to be “sound in the faith.” “In love” is the next word of the apostle. The order is instructive. As faith alone introduces into God's love toward us, so faith alone enables us to abound in the love of one another. There is scarce anything in which we are more liable to be deceived than in this divine charity, blessed as it is where real and holy. But it must be “faith working through love;” for faith brings in God, and God is love. It is not meant merely in what He has done for us, but in what He is and works in us. “He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love;” and “he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him” This supposes not

only the truth known and enjoyed, but present communion with Him Who has made it all known to us in Christ and makes it good in those that are His, among whom questions are sure to rise which put the measure, and even reality, of love in us to the severest test.

There is another final want, of which the apostle speaks: that the aged men be sound— “in patience,” as well as in faith and love. Evil abounds; but evil, where the heart abides in faith and love, will not seldom give the opportunity of being above it. It may cause suffering; but in this there is fellowship with the Master; and patience well becomes the aged saint. It was a primary sign even for an apostle; as few things seem more sad where it is lacking, particularly among elders.

Chapter 201

On Titus 2:3-5

Exhortation is now given for the other sex. “That aged women likewise be in deportment reverent, not slanderers, not enslaved to much wine; teachers of that which is good, that they may train (σωφρον■ξωσι) the young women to love their husbands, [and] love their children, (to be) discreet [or sober-minded], chaste, workers at home, good, subject to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (ver. 3-5).

As aged men were begun with, so aged women follow. With such, dress is not so special a snare as it is to the younger; but it is of great moment that, not their apparel only, but their general demeanor, should be suited to, and consistent with, those who have to do with sacred things. This, therefore, holds the first place. They would naturally be somewhat less restrained, from their age and habits, in all probability formed before their conversion to God. But grace is superior to all difficulties, and forms by the truth, instead of finding, that which is pleasing to the Lord. The doctrine however sound would be put to shame by irreverent carriage and demeanor. Where they bore themselves as those who had the fear of God before their eyes, it would commend their profession.

The next snare against which they are warned is the abuse of the tongue. Aged women were not to be “slanderers.” Unquestionably it becomes none that call on the name of the Lord; but as men are more exposed to the snare of rough or violent actions, so elder women to give vent to their feelings when irritated or in ally other way crossed. Idleness too (and often at their time of life there is apt to be a suspension of activity) would give room for injurious gossip. The Spirit of God therefore warns, in the next place, against abusive language on their part.

Again, their age, especially in the country before the apostle's mind, would give them opportunity and desire for wine. Naturally, we all know that the jaded body and tried mind might fall back on some such stimulant; as it is said in the last chapter of Proverbs, “Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts; let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his poverty no more. But the word is plain, “not enslaved to much wine.” Whatever may be the speculations of moderns, scripture will not bend to theory, but maintains liberty for the Christian in the use of every creature of God. Our Lord Himself personally and particularly disproved the assumption that all such use is evil in itself. Here, too, we have a clear proof that there is no absolute prohibition whatever. Timothy was even enjoined to use a little wine for his stomach's sake and his other infirmities. Aged women are simply cautioned that they be not enslaved to much wine. Such excitement as it can give becomes not those who, having Christ as their life, are exhorted to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5).

But the apostle is not content with guarding them against snares. It was fitting from their age that they should be “teachers of that which is good.” By good in this clause he does not mean what was benevolent, but what was honorable, what befitted themselves, and themselves in relation to the Lord. Aged women would have considerable opportunities. Set free from the calls on young and vigorous life, in old age they have a no less suited sphere of usefulness. Let them look to it that

they be teachers, with the weight which experience gives, of that which is upright and comely. Whatever may be the tendency of nature, and the inclination from habit, grace brings in the name of Christ, and from Christ flows out all that becomes the saints, precious in God's eyes, whether they teach or are taught.

Next, the apostle looks at their relation to younger women, with whom they would as the rule have a strong influence. How were they to use their opportunities? “That they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children.” Here they would be admirably in place, and with the Lord before their eyes their experience would prove invaluable for those that have to face the daily difficulties and dilemmas of human life. Not merely were they to school their youngers to be subject to their husbands; to cultivate affection in the home circle is particularly pressed. This would win with an adversary of the truth, where godliness might at first be repellent; along with it love to a husband and to children is indispensably to be cherished by the wife and mother. Christianity was never intended to enfeeble the affections. If Christ governs, He is also the spring of sure unfailing strength. There is no trial with the husband or the child to which His grace would not apply; and the elder women were of all the most suited to cheer and confirm the hearts of their youngers, that they should not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.

But there is another exhortation which fits in most suitably. They were to train their younger sisters to be discreet or sober-minded; they might be liable to enthusiasm on the one hand, or to carelessness on the other. Discretion is therefore a most needed quality to preserve in the true path of godliness and wisdom in the midst of the difficulties of ordinary life.

Further, purity claims a great place in the exhortation of the elders to their youngers. They were to train them to be chaste, in deed, word and spirit. Here the Spirit of God, revealing Christ, is of all power. How little it was known among the Greeks, or even the Jews to their shame! Their very religion defiled the Greeks; it was the consecration of every corruption, and made them far more polluted than if they had none. So mighty and so essential a quality is purity in Christianity, that it outwardly left a wholly new element, where grace was forgotten and truth almost effaced. Yet even then and there the very artists of christendom, the sculptors and painters, not to speak of poets, manifested how deeply the light of Christ had penetrated their conceptions, as compared with the voluptuous remains of ancient art. But here it was no question of surviving sentiment, but a living reality, which a selfish Jew, or a dissolute Greek, would not fail to appreciate in family life.

The next thing pressed is that they be devoted to domestic occupation— “workers at home.” One cannot but feel the gracious wisdom of such an exhortation as this; and it, must have struck those who lived in heathen circumstances even more than ourselves, accustomed to the blessed contrast with heathen habits, in days of christendom, however degenerate. It is a fine example of the way in which the Spirit of God adapts Himself to the most ordinary duties in the present scene. See it in Christ, Who lived for so many years of His life, subject to His parents, and Who, in the obscurest of conditions, advanced in wisdom as well as favor with God and man. It is He Who makes all these exhortations as simple and easily understood as they are morally elevating. He brings in His own grace as applicable to women as to men. He shows us the way in every sense, the pattern of obeying God, undoubtedly beyond all comparison; yet how many has He not led, and fashioned, and blessed, in that narrow path!

The next exhortation is of great value, following diligence in home work. It is that the younger women should be “good,” in the sense of kindness. If Christ were not before their eyes, home work might be despised as drudgery. Christ sheds a heavenly light on every earthly duty, answering to the riband of blue which God commanded the Jews to attach to their garments. But the exhortation to kindness in this sort has special wisdom in following home work. There is no place where it is more valuable and less frequent. Nothing short of the Lord's grace could make it a constant habit, where countless little occurrences would inevitably turn up to try patience. But with Christ before the heart goodness would hold on its unobtrusive way; they would labor on as seeing Him Who is invisible.

Last, but not least, is the unvarying call that wives should be in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. What more irritating to a husband than the readiness on the wife's part to question his authority, or interfere with his plans? The habit of subjection is of all things the most suited to win a husband's ear; and assuredly the knowledge of Christ would give the secret of wisdom, whether he were a Christian or not. If he had experienced the danger and the evil of slighting advice, given very probably at his own desire, it would have the effect of producing the wish to hear again; but the wife's unjudged insubordinate spirit would completely counteract this happy influence, and make even what might be good to be shunned and disregarded. It was therefore of the greatest moment that the elder women should instill it into their youngers to be in subjection to their own husbands; and this not merely for the peace and profit of the household in general, and for the happy relation of the wife and husband, but “that the word of God be not blasphemed,” or evil spoken of. The failure of a wife in adorning the doctrine of God our Savior by subjection, even in that intimate tie, would not fail to bring reproach, not merely on herself individually, or her associates, but on the word of God itself. This may be unjust, but it proves what men expect from such as claim the possession of His favor; and these are bound to acknowledge that responsibility.

Chapter 202

On Titus 2:9-12

Slavery was one of the grave facts which Christianity had to face, then universal, in some places existing yet to a certain extent. Nowhere does the power of Christ's work more clearly or more decidedly prove its heavenly source and character.

The apostle bids Titus exhort “Bond-servants to be in subjection to their own masters, to be well-pleasing in all things, not gainsaying, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things” (Titus 2:9-10). Here again subjection is the prime duty of such a relationship, and is accordingly put in the foreground—subjection to their own masters. Occupation only in thought with others might only do mischief. “To be well-pleasing in all things” is sometimes a very great difficulty, it may be from the peculiarities of the master or from those of the bondman. Satan would love to insinuate that in any other circumstances they might better obey, and that it is in vain as they are to think of being well-pleasing in all things. One's own master might be capricious or fault-finding; but there is no lowering the claim of Christ; and it is Christ, and Christ alone kept before the eyes, that enables a bondman to be truly subject and to persevere in all things instead of giving up something at least in despair. For faith, not resignation, is the true divine antidote to the passion of despair, which is never to be thought of by a Christian. Who more than a slave needs to remember God's call to rejoice in the Lord always?

Further, the slave was to be “not gainsaying, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity.” Many a one could do or even bear much who finds it difficult to avoid answering again; but the word is “not gainsaying.” Again, stolen themselves, or the children of those who were stolen, it was natural to have scanty respect for the rights of others whose very relationship was in general based on a wrong. But the apostle admits no reasoning on abstract rights as an excuse for “purloining.” He insists on Christian bondmen “showing every sort of good fidelity.” They were really serving the same Master as their masters if Christians; and without the sense of direct responsibility to the Lord, as well as of His grace, how could they go on thoroughly aright? So elsewhere grace teaches and exhorts that, whatsoever they do, they were to work from the soul as unto the Lord, and not unto men. It was not enough that they were not to be inconsistent and unworthy saints; but as the apostle here says, “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”

God's gospel is glad tidings to the highest earthly personage no less than to the lowest, though (as the rule) to the poor it is preached as alone generally accessible. No king, no queen, no emperor, but what is infinitely indebted, if the heart is opened, to the grace of God. How unspeakably sweet then for those in the painful and trying position of slavery!

It was this that wrought so powerfully on the affections of the blessed apostle. Therefore is he drawn out in the fall and beautiful declaration of the message of God's love. “For the grace of God appeared bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godlily in this present age” (Titus 2:11-12).

When the law was given by Moses, it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator, All kinds of partitions barred man's way; clouds of incense, and veils rose up between the Israelite and God, Whose manifestation was only for one representative man, the high priest, for a passing moment and with ample blood, in the holiest. The law was the test of man already fallen, that sin might appear in its true colors. If sin was there, as it was, the law could only work wrath; for disobedience then takes the shape of open violation or transgression. Therefore is it said that the law came in by the way (παρεισ■λθεν), that the trespass might abound, and that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful. Thus law in result must surely condemn the sinner. It could never justify nor save the guilty, being characteristically the ministration of condemnation and death.

The gospel is wholly different in nature and effect where received. Therein the grace of God did appear, and we can add from elsewhere God's righteousness is revealed—the righteousness of faith which justifies, instead of condemning, because its efficacy is grounded on the accomplished and atoning work of Christ. Its character therefore is “bringing salvation,” and this not to a single people like Israel under the law, but “to all men.” The grace of God revealing Himself in Christ and His redemption is too precious to be limited; it is in itself infinite, for God is love as surely as He is light; and both have come out fully in Christ and especially in His death. God therefore is not of Jews only but of Gentiles also, Who justifies circumcision not by law but by faith, and uncircumcision through their actual faith, as we read in Rom. 3. A crucified Christ displays man as he really is. Jews and Gentiles are proved therein guilty and lost. But the grace of God goes out “to all” alike indiscriminately, not judging but “saving.” Such is the gospel as here shown. It is not a demand of works nor a test of man, but especially founded upon the work of God Himself in Christ; it is a revelation of His saving goodness for man to believe. “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved; for with the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Nor is this all. While His grace presents salvation to all, it is also said to be disciplining us. Then change from “all men” to “us” is important, and ought not to be overlooked. The one is the universal message of God, which may or may not be received. The other is the distinct effect, whenever souls receive that message in faith. And to what end does God's grace teach us? “Instructing us to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and godlily, in this present age.” No mistake is grosser or more antagonistic to the teaching of the apostle, than, after believing the gospel, to cast the Christian on the law as his rule of life. It is not so. Christ alone remains, not only the Savior, but the way, the truth, and the life; In and through Him has the grace of God appeared, and His grace alone saves by faith. But, besides, it disciplines us, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, and righteously and godlily, in this present age. We have first to watch against our inward snares, and those around us, to deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts.” Either might work more or less to ruin the soul and dishonor God. In those who believing in Christ have a new and eternal life, a new character has to be formed, and old habits must be watched against which grew up in our past evil and folly. But that which is negative does not suffice for God as He reveals Himself in His Son. His grace, which goes far beyond law, instructs us, that we should live soberly as regards ourselves, righteously as regards others, and godlily in our highest relationship; for this present age is an evil one. But Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age,

according to the will of God our Father (Gal. 1:4). As it is here, in this world and during this age, that we live for the present, we are therefore called to be so much the more vigilant, if indeed we hear His voice.

Chapter 203

On Titus 2:13-15

But there is another all-important branch of truth and full of rich fruit for the believer— “Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (ver. 13).

It is the object before us which forms our character. The Christian object is the Lord in glory; we may say of it in this respect what David said of Goliath's sword, “There is none like it.” The essential thing for the soul's salvation undoubtedly is Christ and His work for us received in faith. But if the true hope be lacking to the believer, the blank is irreparable. This is the fact, even if energy of faith and love may do much to hinder the wiles of Satan, who would insinuate false hopes under fair pleas as a substitute for the faith once delivered to the saints. As Christ is the proper object of faith, and as the Spirit forms us practically by our beholding Him living for us in heavenly glory, and thus transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as we read in 2 Corinthians so the right and divinely given object of hope is the coming of Christ to receive us to Himself.

Here the apostle presents it in a comprehensive way, not only the blessed hope, but the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Grace, we know, has already appeared (ver. 11), saving grace for all men. This they reject at their peril; for salvation cannot be otherwise, and the richer and surer the grace that saves, the guiltier is the unbelief that refuses or slights it. The grace of God alone leads into a walk of communion, and of practical righteousness for every day. But we need also to look for “the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory.” These are the two parts which comprise the revealed object God would have before our souls. “The blessed hope” is that which alone can satisfy the heart; it is to be in the presence of Christ on high, changed at His coming into His likeness and with Him forever. “The appearing of the” divine “glory” is bound up with it, and follows in due time, as that display of the divine manifestation in power, which our renewed souls cannot but desire to the utter exclusion of moral and physical evil and of Satan's guileful energy. It is Christ Who introduces it. As He brought the grace of God here below, so will He the glory to appear in His day. And He is called “the great God” as well as our Savior, lest we might forget His essential nature, when He executes judgments as Man glorified.

There is nothing nobler to act on the affections and the convictions, on the ends and ways, of man here below. Not in the smallest degree weakening the faith which works by love, it cheers and animates in the face of all which makes him groan; and we do groan now because, reconciled to God ourselves, we see nothing yet reconciled around us. Yea, we know not only a perishing world but a morally ruined church; not only the Gentiles still without God, but the Jews most of all hating the gospel of Christ. And what deliverance have we wrought in the earth? how far have we Christians, individually or together, reflected the heavenly glory of Christ as a testimony to those without? If the righteous with difficulty are saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?

Truly there is no ground for boasting save in the Lord, “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works” (ver. 14). Thus, when bringing in the bright future of God, which alone can

dispossess the enemy and deliver a fallen race and rained world, carefully does the apostle remind our souls that all has been of grace. We have no claim, no desert; we stand by and to nothing, but the Savior Who gave, not this or that merely, nor a thousand other things, however precious, which He indeed, and only could give, but that which is beyond all price, “Who gave Himself for us.” God the Father had His blessed part in the inestimable gift. He knowing all gave Him, sent Him. And He 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 effect too answers to the cause: there is no failure, nor can there be, in the result for those that believe. What was His aim? “That He might redeem (or ransom) us from all lawlessness, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works.” Let us seek sedulously to make this good in our hearts, and to be a people for His own possession and delight (not “peculiar” in words or manner, habit or feeling), but for Him to have us as His own. It is wondrous that He should care to have us, or make much of such a possession. What joy to the heart that He values us! May we be encouraged for this the more to be zealous of good works, not benevolent only but honorable and comely, not of forms or ordinances like Jews, nor of false gods like Gentiles.

“These things speak, and exhort, and reprove, with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (ver. 15). Arduous is the work of the ministry. Speaking, and exhorting, and reproving, must all have their place in faithful service. And “all authority” is thoroughly consistent with all humility. Woe be to those who despise Christ in the least of the servants whom He sends!

Chapter 204

On Titus 3:1-2

From personal and domestic duties the apostle turns now to those which are external.

“Put them in mind to be in subjection to principalities, to authorities; to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing all meekness unto all men” (ver. 1, 2).

As the apostle Peter presses similar exhortations on the believing Jews in his First Epistle, so did the apostle very fully in writing to the Roman believers, who were mostly Gentiles. Now he charges Titus, himself a Gentile, to lay similar injunctions habitually on the Cretan brethren, whose countrymen were notorious for their insubordination and many vices to boot. Never was such an exhortation more needed than now, when the lawlessness of the age so rapidly increases as to shock all the right-minded. Lawlessness in the world is no less flagrant than a similar spirit in the church, though no doubt it is specially hateful in the temple of God, where the Holy Ghost dwells; but it is very possible for men to hold a rigid theory of obedience within the church, and to trample under foot and deny a similar responsibility in the world.

Scripture however is plain and decided: it is not enough that it be for wrath's sake, but for conscience. God is concerned in our subjection, for there is no authority but of God, those that be are ordained of God: monarchical, republican, or any mixture of the two, are ordained of God. “Therefore, he that resisteth authority withstandeth the ordinance of God.” Nor does it matter whether it be a supreme ruler or those commissioned by Him, as the apostle Peter lets us know (1 Peter 2:13-14), “For this is the will of God.” It was ordered in His providence that when the apostle wrote to the saints at Rome, one of the most cruel despots reigned: even so let every soul be in subjection to the higher authorities. The worst ruler is better than anarchy. Nevertheless it is not for this reason of utility that the word of God speaks. Whoever he may be, he is the minister of God for good. He beareth not the sword in vain, he is a minister of God, and avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. If this doctrine is strange in our day, it is the more incumbent on the faithful, not only to believe, but to practice accordingly

Next, Titus was to remind them to be obedient in a general way. That this is the force of the word is plain from the New Testament usage. There is no sufficient reason to translate “to obey magistrates,” as in the A. V. This is to lose an exhortation by making it a mere repetition of the former clause. Do people plead the rights of man? the true place of the saint is “to obey.” Do they abase obedience in order to set aside the authority of God? the answer is, “We ought to obey God rather than man.” But obedience always, and every where is the duty of the saint. If not sure of the will of God, he ought to wait till he learns, if one of the elect in sanctification of the Spirit onto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. We are neither Jews under law, nor are we lawless Gentiles. The spirit of obedience Godward, if not always of man, it is therefore of the highest moment to inculcate.

But, further, the apostle would have Titus to press readiness unto every good work. The saint is called not only to be a righteous man practically, but a good man. So our Lord here below went about doing good. If we cannot, like Him, heal those that were oppressed of the devil, we are here exhorted to be ready unto every good work. It is a real and effective testimony to Christ where the truth is held and confessed along with it.

But again, he would have them put in mind “to speak evil of no man.” This is no easy matter in a world where evil abounds on every side, and where so much of it is leveled at the children of God in both word and deed; but God's word to us is plain, “to speak evil of no man.” There may be a duty to bear witness for a godly end. Let us take care that it is only thus we can be charged with it.

Moreover, it is very difficult for those who are in the truth not to seem “contentious” toward such as deny it, or count it unattainable or indifferent. With Christ before us, however, the clear place of the Christian is to be really far from any strife, though charity demands that we should bear our testimony to the truth, and ever to deal faithfully with our brethren. If the Jew was not to allow sin in his neighbor, how much more is the Christian to be watchful in love, and speaking the truth in love! This can only be with God before our eyes as seen in Christ., Then love is used and is never contentious.

Moreover, we are called to be “gentle.” Here again Christ has left us an example that we should follow in His steps. None so withering in His exposure of hypocrisy and self-righteousness; yet none so tender and considerate even to the most faulty against Himself.

Lastly comes, “showing all meekness toward all men.” What self-judgment is called for! what continual walking by faith and not by sight! Christ before our eyes believingly can alone either call it out or sustain it, whatever the circumstances.

Chapter 205

On Titus 3:3

The apostle now draws a very dark yet true and life-like picture, not merely of what man is here or all over the world, but of what we ourselves were once in our natural state. It is evident that this was intended to strengthen the duty of subjection to authority on the one hand, and on the other the spirit of mild and meek bearing to all mankind, in all those who bear the name of the Lord. Grace was to prevail and display itself all round. This has been far from always the fact among God's children. And no wonder. They have been trained up for the most part under the mistaken assumption that the law is the rule of life for the Christian. The consequence has been that the Christians so formed have manifested the spirit of earthly righteousness, much more than of heavenly grace. Necessarily in the measure of our uprightness we are really characterized by that which governs our thoughts and affections. If error rule there, as communion fails, the walk is proportionably perverted from the will of God.

No maxim more false than that the practical life is independent of the creed. Christ is set forth in the written word as the true rule of Christian life; and as He walked Himself, so He uses all the word of God in the power of the Spirit to create in us intelligence as well as divine motives flowing out of His love. Grace, therefore, is the predominant character of the Christian, the direct and essential opposite of law. Undoubtedly God did of old test Israel by His law, and the commandment is holy, just, and good; but the object was to prove the impossibility of aught good in man, or to be got out of man. This the believer has to learn, and alone does learn, experimentally. On that ground nothing but the grace of God in Christ can deliver from sin, as well as from its consequences; but the practical effect is that the righteous import (τ■ δικα■ωμα) of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. With those who theorize about the law, it begins with ineffectual struggles, and issues in disappointment or delusion.

Hence the importance for us, who, as believers in Christ, are now the objects of divine grace, that we should draw lessons of lowly love, not only from the incomparable grace which has saved us, but from the utter depths of evil out of which we ourselves have been saved. “For we ourselves also were once foolish, disobedient, gone [or led] astray, serving [as slaves] divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, abominable, hating one another” (ver. 3).

To the Greek mind especially, perhaps no description was less welcome than that with which the apostle commences, “our folly.” But this is the truth. Human knowledge has nothing to do with it, save, it may be, by making the contrast more glaring. See a man, on the one hand full of science, sound information, and letters, as in Rom. 3; on the other hand a prey to every falsehood about God, and wholly without, and insensible of, any living relationship with Him. In the beast there cannot be such a link from its nature; there is for it no moral association with God. But a man! He had, even as man, God breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, whereby he became a living soul; he is therefore immediately and ever morally responsible; he was made to obey God, as much as to rule the lower creation. On earth the brute looks down, man alone looks up. Sin has utterly ruined this, whilst the responsibility remains. He has become the slave of a mightier rebel

than himself. What “folly” now? and what can the end be?

Accordingly we find the next description of the apostle is “disobedient.” This is the universal condition of man; so he lives and dies in his natural state, never once obeying God here below. From a condition so desperate Christ; Himself the obedient Man, though infinitely more than man, alone delivers, and this by imparting His own life through faith. “He that believeth hath everlasting life.” It is true that this could not avail without Christ's death, which alone removes man's guilt before God by Christ's suffering, Just for unjust, on the cross. Yet even His death could only be a blessed incentive to a new walk here below; and there would be no new life in which the Holy Ghost could act by the word, were that all. The first want therefore of a sinful soul is the breath of a new and spiritual life. But herein was manifested the love of God in our case, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Life in Him is only and always an obedient life; thereby the Holy Spirit separates us from evil from the moment of conversion. For we are sanctified, as the apostle Peter says, to the obedience of Jesus Christ, no less than to the sprinkling of His blood. Without His blood we should be oppressed with the sense of unremitted sins. Spiritual life alone would rather deepen this sense; life could not remove it righteously. It is there that His death by grace comes in effectually for us before God. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:9, 10).

Thus the whole work of Christ is necessary for sinful man, and is the incomparable boon which faith enjoys in its fullness; but the practical aim of it all is that we, having died to sins, should live onto righteousness (1 Peter 2) and walk even as He walked here below. “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth His word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected” (1 John 2). For man there is nothing good without obedience, yet were we also once as “disobedient,” as we were “foolish” or without intelligence.

Further, we were not only wandering in error, but “deceived,” however highly we may have thought of our independence and shrewd judgment. Nor should one be surprised to learn that so it was. We were part of the world which lies in the wicked one, where the spirit of self-will governs all without exception, Jews or Gentiles, among the sons of disobedience. “We also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest” (Ephesians wholly ignorant that we were but slaves of one who is a liar and the father of it.

Nor was the evil confined to disease of the mind. We were “serving divers lusts and pleasures “; so much the more bondmen, because we flattered ourselves that we were pre-eminently free. We did our own will and pleased ourselves; we chose our pleasures here or there as we liked. What was this but to be slaves of the devil when we were pursuing divers lusts and pleasures? Our will is his slavery.

Such ways as these exposed us to constant dangers, difficulties, strains and ruffles. Conflict of will broke in upon the calmest surface of amiability; gusts of feeling, yea, of passion, swept us along now and then; in short we were, as Paul says here, “living in malice and in envy,” whatever might be the good opinion we had of ourselves or valued one from another.

Lastly, the apostle does not hesitate to say we were “abominable” as well as “hating one another.” We awakened the horror of other people, spite of all appearances or efforts; and others returned “hate” with no less bitterness of feeling. What a power of evil lay on us! What a reality of shame is alienation from God!

Chapter 206

On Titus 3:4

“But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love toward man appeared.” The A. V. rather fails in that it merges the philanthropy of God in His kindness; whereas, by a distinct article to each, the two things are presented separately, however closely associated otherwise. Next, God's love toward man is a single word φιλανθρωπ■α, whereas the absence of the article in the English makes its natural meaning to be His kindness toward man as well as His love. Now this is not really the thought expressed by the apostle, which appears to be as I have endeavored to represent it.

It is a blessed and full statement of what God is in His kindness in contrast with all that we were in our folly and evil aforetime. Corruption, violence, disobedience, and error described ourselves. God, Who is holy and of inflexible righteousness, is also the God of gracious goodness in His own nature, and has most especial love towards man. This is no longer hidden, no longer a manifestation to be waited for; it has appeared so completely that God Himself could not add to the expression of His love. “The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” It is true that no man has seen God at any time, but this has in no way hindered the activity of His kindness and the proof of His love to man; on the contrary, it has given occasion for its richest possible display. “The only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” Nothing could match this. It was beyond all thought of creature. The angels were lost in admiration; men, in stupid unbelief, think nothing about it, else their hard hearts would melt before the wonders of such love. The mind of man is incapable of fathoming grace, and therefore retreats into its own dark selfishness. And no wonder, if he judge as he is ever apt to judge of God by himself. Not one that ever was born would have had the heart for such a thing, even if he could. He sent His only Son to die for His enemies! To die for a good man, or for a dear friend, is what some rare man might do, as it has been done; to die for one's enemies is an impossibility for man. But this is the very way in which the kindness of God and His love toward man appeared. Being characteristically divine it can only be received by faith. Those who believe their own thoughts, and judge from their own feelings, refuse to receive it, give the lie to God, and are therefore lost, and this most justly. For this is the rejection of God, alike in His grace and truth. Now, whatever may be the compassion of God toward foolish disobedient man, as we who were so once can but testify, God cannot pass by deliberate and persistent contempt of His love in the presence of His revealed light. And it is the true light of God which is now shining. Such is the gospel of Christ, in which more than in all else put together the kindness of God and His love toward man appeared. He sent it forth to every creature as the sun shines for every land.

It was not so with the law, however capable of dealing in a righteous way with every heart that takes it up. Still the law was given to Israel, and they only were formally and by divine authority placed under the law. According to the scriptures the Gentiles were without law, and on this ground will they pass under God's judgment, as we are told in Rom. 2. But now even they, who were nothing but sinners, and had nothing but the conscience to accuse or excuse, have the unspeakable privilege of the gospel preached to them. As the Jews were without excuse in

rejecting their Messiah when He came to them in love and ample attestation, so the Gentiles are yet more inexcusable if they shut their eyes and ears to that Christ, Who lifted up draws all men unto Him. It was a wonder for God in His love to humble Himself and come down to man in the person of His Son become a man. It was a wonder infinite that a man Who was God incarnate died as a sacrifice for sinners on the cross. He now is raised from the dead and received up in glory, exalted to give repentance and remission of sins, not to Israel only, but to any poor sinner who believes in Him to the ends of the earth.

“This is love, not that we loved God [which was what law asked but did not get], but that He loved us and gave His Son [this is the gospel] as a propitiation for our sins.” Thus did the kindness of God and His love toward man appear. It is matchless, full of comfort, deliverance, and blessing to every soul believing in Christ; but he who despises it, as he dishonors God in His deepest grace, so he incurs God's vengeance and everlasting judgment. In the solemn words of our Lord Jesus Himself, “He that believeth (obeyeth) not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

Chapter 207

On Titus 3:5

It is remarkable that if we find the word in its human application in Acts 28:2, this is the only passage in scripture, where we hear of “philanthropy” or love of mankind predicated of God our Savior. This is worthy of inspiration. The philanthropy of God means His special affection towards man and, as we shall see presently, shown in a way of which the creature is quite incapable. Benevolent men boast of their own philanthropy or of their fellows. What can be more in contrast? The baser metal is displayed very often by Arians, Unitarians, and Deists, by heterodox Agnostics and Positivists. Furthermore Christians of every sort scruple not to join frequently in an unholy alliance with any or all those enemies of the faith. Men glory in these combinations so foreign to God's word and Christ's cross, worldly substitutes for the unity of the Spirit we are enjoined to keep. They rejoice that any merely natural means should be applied to the relief of social distress and personal misery.

In what is purely external and of this creation men can all unite, whatever their faith or lack of faith, yea, opposition to the faith of God's elect. Such is the philanthropy of man, without serious thought of God's word or will, occupied with prisons and workhouses, the hospital and the asylum, and seeking to deal with every degraded class, as well as the misery of the world in general. But our Savior God deals with man and brings in the light which discloses his ruin in the best circumstances, from the throne down to the firstborn of the maid-servant that is behind the mill. God's philanthropy views the human philanthropists as perhaps most of all needing His saving love, because they are blinded to their sins by the consciousness of amiability or benevolence. Many of them in principle believe nothing unseen. They see only the facts of human misery and seek to alleviate it, wholly ignorant that they themselves are wretched before God no less than the lowest of those they would relieve, and this for an eternity, which they not only do not believe but perhaps openly deny.

God's philanthropy is as different as His nature is from man's, and springs from motives of love in Himself, as it is based on the sacrifice of Christ. So we are told in the verse before. No longer hidden as once, it has appeared; and man is the more responsible because it contemplates all, but it is valid only for those who believe. For it is not “By works in righteousness which we ourselves did, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost” (ver. 5). Language cannot be clearer than this.

The works of man as a ground for salvation are excluded; and most mercifully, for how could the unrighteous man—and such we were by nature before God—do works in righteousness? There is no doubt a work done in righteousness, if there ever was such, and an infinite one. Christ, the Righteous One, did it all. For it terminated with His suffering for sin. Thereby have we our blessed portion. We committed sins in unrighteousness abundantly; works in righteousness we ourselves never did till we were justified by divine grace. But according to His mercy God saved us. Thus is He God our Savior. It is not only the title of His character: He has wrought according to His mercy in Christ.

It is not a theory but a fact; according to His mercy He saved us. The best part of Judaism consisted of shadows which prefigured this; but Christianity is founded on facts in Christ come and suffering for us, and these facts are now applied to souls. Christ is the life eternal; and the Christian has that life in Him, not in himself but in Christ. “He that believeth hath eternal life;” yet he was guilty and cannot deny his sins, but confesses and hates them before God. We needed therefore a Savior to die for our sins as much as a giver to us of life everlasting. This in both its parts was in the mercy of God; and thus according to His mercy He saved us.

But a mercy unknown or doubtful in its application to the soul is shorn of half its blessedness. Such is not the philanthropy of God. He loves that we should know what Christ has done and suffered for us. Believing in Him we are saved and know it on His own word and in the delivering power of His Spirit. Hence it is added, “According to His mercy He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Not only are we set in a new position through Christ's death and resurrection, of which baptism is the sign; but there is the effectual power of the Holy Spirit to renew us, making it an effectual belief in the soul from first to last. It is unbelief alone that doubts God's salvation, if we believe in Jesus. “He saved us,” though it is only in a way most holy and that secures holiness in us.

Regeneration is a new state of things, and not merely “to be born again,” as anyone can see in Matt. 19:28, “And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” It is the changed state of the earth which the Lord will introduce at His coming, as the kingdom of God pre-supposes according to John 3. That state is not yet come; but there is an action of grace which already apprehends a believer for it the moment he receives Christ. Of this baptism is the sign—not of the new birth, buff of deliverance from sin and its effects, by the death of Christ witnessed in the power of His resurrection that has taken away the sting. Superstitious men, who know not God's grace in Christ, can only misuse the sign and confound it with the thing signified. The gospel may not dispense with the outward side; but it announces an everlasting reality in Christ risen. How blessed to have our part in this new creation even now (2 Cor. 5)! How wondrous to know that “if any one is in Christ, it is a new creation! The old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself through Christ.” Before this is manifested to every eye, the Christian has the washing of regeneration now and renewing of the Holy Spirit also. This makes the force evident. If the washing of regeneration is an objective sign, the renewing is a real and divine work in the soul. In order that it should be so, the Holy Spirit, as He does invariably, takes His suited, and efficacious part, which is no mere token but a reality in power.

It is well known that some are disposed to understand here “the laver of regeneration.” The A. V. did not recognize this; the margin of the Revised Version does. It is well that the Revisers did not venture farther. The notion is absolutely unfounded; for λουτρ■ν never means laver but washing, or the water for the washing (in the sense of hath) as is notorious. Never in the N. T. occurs λουτ■ρ which is the proper word for “laver.” They are both found in the Septuagint, and even λουτρ■ν, a place for washing or bathing-room. It is strange indeed that a commentator of learning could say that λουτρ■ν is always a vessel or pool in which washing takes place, here the “baptismal font.” Liddell and Scott do, it is true, give “a bath, bathing place,” but not a solitary instance of such usage. Their abundant references are to hot or cold bathing in the sense of

washing, or water for it, or even libations to the dead; but λουτ■ρ is the tub or laver, as λουτρ■ν is the place or bath-room. Bp. Ellicott and Dean Alford misrepresent the Lexx., of course only through haste or pre-occupation. The word is correctly translated “washing” in our text. There could be no question about the matter unless there had been a prejudice to warp the mind. The wish was father of the thought.

Chapter 208

On Titus 3:6

(CHAP. 3: 6.)

Salvation then is no outward work; nor is it now mere deliverance by power, but personal and inward." through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." There is a total change of position in Christ, a new place which is given to the believer, as well as another state subjectively. This is expressed by the washing and renewing. Old things are passed away, all things are become new. For now the believer is in Christ. As a man he was in Adam. Faith is now entitled to know that we all stand in Christ by God's mercy, and altogether independently of what we did ourselves. Thus the evil is gone before God and for the conscience; for Christ is risen, the full expression of the state into which the Christian is brought by grace.

But, besides the subjective change and the objective place, there is an incomparably blessed power which works in those who are brought into this standing. It is not only that there is the "renewing," perfectly true as this is; but the Holy Ghost Himself has been poured out upon us in all fullness, as it has been said here, "Which He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (ver. 6). This covers the entire Christian life. It is not merely that He effectually works, but He abides with us for over. This is of immense value and in evident contrast with O. T. privilege where the danger of His leaving is felt and deprecated, as we see in Psa. 51. Under the gospel our privileges are known as abiding. The life is eternal, and so is the redemption, as well as the inheritance. It is in short eternal salvation. The Holy Spirit Himself is even called in the Hebrews the Eternal Spirit, though there it is in His special connection with Christ offering Himself without spot to God. But beyond controversy it is the same Spirit Who is now by grace imparted to us, or, as is here expressed with peculiar emphasis, "poured out upon us richly." Undoubtedly this could not be, save "through Jesus Christ our Savior;" but so it is added here, that we might dream of no other ground, on the one hand, and on the other have the fullest assurance of abundant and unfailing grace in the power of the Spirit personally through such a Savior. It is a privilege which never can lapse, any more than God revokes it where faith is living, as it flows through Christ and His redemption.

We know that, on the day when this privilege was first made good, powers and wonders accompanied; but no mistake can well be more pernicious than to confound the gift (δωρ■α) of the Holy Spirit with those gifts (χαπ■σματα) and signs and miracles which were external vouchers, as well as the display of the victory of the ascended Man over all the energy of evil. The presence of the Paraclete is an incomparably higher and deeper thing than all the mighty deeds which He wrought. Just so the grace and truth of our Lord rose above the signs which pointed out Who and what He was. Even tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not; and yet tongues, the characteristic Christian miracle, approach nearer to that which edifies than any other exertion of divine power. But the gracious action of the Holy Spirit conveyed by His personal presence rises far above all such accompaniments, as the cause does above some or all of its effects.

Hence the all-important truth for all saints is, that while displays of power have passed away, as unsuited to the ruined state of the church, that which always was and is most needed and precious abides, because it rests on His work, finished on earth and accepted in heaven, Who never changes; and it comes to us through Christ, the same yesterday and to-day and forever. It is He who gives us to cry, “Abba, Father,” and this is in the Spirit of the Son. It is He Who takes the things of Christ, and shows them to us and glorifies Him. It is He Who searches all things, yea the deep things of God. He gives us communion with the Father and the Son, no less than He helps our infirmity and makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, because He makes it for the saints according to God. It is He who is all-powerful on the one hand for service in testifying of Christ, on the other for the worship of saints, in the assembly above all.

The Holy Spirit has abdicated His relation to the assembly no more than to the individual Christian. It is only by the Holy Spirit that every believer can say that Jesus is Lord; but the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each to profit withal, for to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit. If there are external ornaments taken away, we can and ought surely to justify God; but He withholds nothing that is really necessary or profitable and for His own glory. Just as of old, so it is now—one and the same Spirit works all, dividing to each one severally as He will, for He is sovereign; and woe be to those who presume to control Him I He abides therefore for the blessing of the church and individual saints to Christ's glory.

The wealth of our privileges in the present gift of the Spirit corresponds to the nearness of relationship with the God and Father of Christ, and to the oneness with Christ into which only the Christian is introduced; and these are every one of them blessings not more intimate, and rich beyond all other times, than permanent: of none is this predicated more emphatically than of the Holy Spirit. But the unbelief of Christendom apprehends none of them as now revealed; and even God's children for the most part are a prey to doubt and darkness as to each, through the spirit of the world that has invaded them all but universally, even where they have not become victims of the delusion of the enemy in a vain pretension to a special revival. From all this evil on either side faith preserves the soul in peace. For if the Holy Ghost is still “poured out upon as richly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (and to deny this is in principle to deny the perpetuity of Christ's body and of the personal Pentecostal presence of God's Spirit), there is no room for a restoration of what God never took away. And, again, if the Spirit is still here in person, constituting God's assembly, how sad and shameless for those who believe in it to allow arrangements which grew out of unbelief in His presence and oppose His free action in the assembly or by the gifts of the Lord for the edifying of His body! Would that they who err in spirit might come to understanding, and they who murmur might learn doctrine! “In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength,” as wrote the evangelical prophet.

Chapter 209

On Titus 3:7

Now comes the design of God. His kindness and love to man appeared in saving according to His own mercy, and with all fullness of favor at this present time: “That, having been justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to hope of eternal life” (ver. 7).

It is a mischievous mistake to suppose that the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on us richly is in order to our justification, as some have strangely conceived. All scripture proves that the gift of the Spirit follows faith, instead of being a preparation for justification. The effect is bad; for the Holy Ghost identifies His work with us: what He effects in and by us is ours. This accordingly would make the new work and walk of saints a means of justification, and thus grace would be no more grace. Not only does scripture else where uniformly prove the fallacy and the evil of such a view, but the very clause before us refutes it. For we are said to have been justified by the grace of God; or, as it is expressed in Rom. 8:34, “It is God that justifieth.” Certainly the believer is the last man to justify himself. God justifies, instead of laying anything to the charge of His elect, who abhor themselves before Him, owning not only their sins, but their nature as vile and corrupt. They are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24). Here it is put as a fact emphatically. “Being, or having been, justified by His grace.” It is already done. Now grace on His part excludes desert on ours. “To him that worketh the reward is not reckoned as of grace but of debt, but to him that worketh not but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness,” and as reasoned out in Rom. 11:6, “if by grace, no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.”

The grace of God assuredly produces works suitable to its source and its character. Holiness of walk follows in its train. But His grace implies necessarily that there is no good thing in us. It is therefore purely favor on His part as far as we are concerned. He has indeed taken care that there should be laid an immutable ground of righteousness; but this is in Christ and His work alone. It is in no way a question of desert in the object of His grace; who on the contrary is saved expressly and exclusively as a lost sinner. From the moment of new birth he becomes a saint and is called to walk thenceforth as such; but in this context it had been already and with precision laid down, “not out of works in righteousness which we had done, but according to His own mercy He saved us.” Christ dead and risen is the sole possible means of God's salvation; and His work of redemption is a righteous ground. For our passover also was sacrificed, Christ, Who died for our sins, having suffered Just for unjust, to bring us to God Who is glorified thereby, as never before, nor so by aught else.

But it is well to note that the apostle speaks of justification with a triple connection. In Rom. 5:1, it is justified by or out of faith. There is no other principle on which it could be without compromise. We look out of ourselves to Christ, and rest only on Him raised from among the dead, Who was delivered for our offenses and raised for our justification. Therefore have we peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is of faith, not of works of law; and these were the two competing principles. If any works could justify a man, it must have been the works of God's law. Works of

man's device could have no value with God. Works of law would have been all well, if man could do them. The truth is that man, being now a sinner, could not possibly face them. “All sinned, and do come short of the glory of God,” which becomes the measure now that Eden is lost by sin. All his works are necessarily vitiated by his fallen condition, even if he had not been as he is powerless through sin. Works of law therefore are wholly unavailing, save to detect and manifest the ruin of a sinner. If he is to be justified, it must be through Another by grace; and therefore it can only be by faith (■κ π.), not by law works. That the apostle in Rom. 5:1 asserts, with its blessed results for our souls toward God, past, present, and future.

But in ver. 9 of the same chapter we are told that we have been justified in (4) His blood. Here the efficacious cause comes forward. Without the blood of Christ no sin could be purged really and forever before God. But the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from every sin, as John declares. Hence if God justifies us, it is in virtue, or in the power, of Christ's blood; and having been now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” Our sins were the great difficulty, as the believer truly felt; but now they are gone, and he is justified and to be saved. Such is the confident assurance to us of the apostle: a monstrous piece of presumption and cruel cheat, if he had not been inspired of God to declare it as righteous and true.

In our text, Titus 3:7, we are directed to the source from which justification flows. It is the grace of God, and not any merit in its objects. It is therefore an unfailing source, with a ground which justifies God no less than the repentant soul. The result is according to the mind and love of God, “that, having been justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to hope of eternal life.” It is difficult to conceive anything more complete than these three statements of the same apostle. The accuracy of the form too is as striking as the truth conveyed is blessed to him who believes. Indeed it is a threefold cord which cannot be broken for him who trusts God by grace.

Some object to “heirs” standing alone; but it is all the more emphatic because it does. In Rom. 8:16, 17, we are told that we who believe are children of God; and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and Christ's joint-heirs. Again, in Gal. 4, the believer is no longer a bondman but a son, and if son, heir also through God (assuredly not through man, himself or others). Thus we learn the double truth, that by faith, not by works of law, we are heirs of God, and this through God. All is sovereign grace. It is He Who made us His heirs; and we are to inherit what Christ will inherit in glory. To Titus the apostle speaks so as to leave us “heirs” all the more largely, because it is quite indefinite.

But we have important words which accompany it: “Heirs according to hope of eternal life.” This life in Christ is the believer's now; but we have it in a body fall of weakness, compassed with infirmities, and in fact mortal. It will not be so when our hope is accomplished at the coming of Christ. Eternal life will be no longer hid with Christ in God, but manifested according to all the power of His glory, as it is even now the gift, the inestimable gift, of God's grace. So in the end of Rom. 6:22, we read, “Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end eternal life.” The glorious future is here before us; then and there alone will the full character of eternal life be seen unhindered. But it is no less really true now, as the next verse (23) shows; for if the wages of sin is death, “the free gift of God (flowing from His favor) is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord!” This is His present gift in Christ. What a privilege for the believer to enjoy now! What a responsibility to walk accordingly and bear a true witness to Him! It is nothing less than Christ in us the hope of glory.

When He comes to Israel, the glory will be possessed and manifest. We have Him as life while He is hidden in God; and when He shall be manifested, then shall we also with Him be manifested in glory.

Chapter 210

On Titus 3:8-11

Nor was the apostle content with his full and clear statement of the gospel. He draws the attention of Titus to its importance and value in a formula not uncommon in these pastoral Epistles. “Faithful [is] the saying; and concerning these things I will that thou affirm strongly, in order that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men; but foolish questionings and genealogies and strifes and legal fightings shun, for they are unprofitable and vain” (ver. 8, 9).

There is no real ground for doubt that the apostle is here looking back on the development of the truth which had just occupied him. The salvation of God from first to last was simply and briefly stated in 1 Tim. 1:15, 16. It was here more fully explained. The relationship of the Holy Ghost to it is brought out as an added privilege, no less than the grace of God as the spring of it all. In 1 Tim. 1 it is just the plain truth of Christ come into the world to save sinners. Certainly the object of faith is not left out here; but God is shown to be a Savior-God as well as Jesus; and the Holy Ghost is said to be poured out richly, besides His renewing us, that, being justified by God's grace, we might be made heirs according to hope of eternal life.

It may be alleged, no doubt, that “faithful is the saying” precedes in the former case, whilst it follows here. But chap. 4: 9, 10, is a clear proof that the order may vary without in any way affecting the certainty of the apostolic application. The A. V. like some others is at least ambiguous, if not misleading; for one might infer from it that the faithful saying was merely the call of believers to maintain good works. This however is a most unworthy sense, which the text, as well as the truth generally, disproves. The apostle is laying down the only ground of power for a fruit-bearing course; he is urgent with Titus, that he should insist constantly and thoroughly on the sure but exclusive truth of salvation by grace in all its fullness as well as reality. This was the apostle's first theme for individual souls everywhere and always; he now presses it on Titus. Without it there is no readiness or power for good works; without it conscience is clouded, the heart hardened: there is neither life nor peace where it is unknown. When we are saved after this divine sort, we are able to take everything to God as well as from Him. In a world which cast out Christ and where Satan reigns, trials and sorrows are expected for the faithful, yet do we give thanks; comforts and joys are given of God, and we give thanks. Faith sees and hears Him Who guides and guards, whatever the difficulty or danger. His will is acceptable as well as holy and perfect. We love not His commandments only, but His word, having found its value in our deepest need, as He by it made known His love to us, in spite of our alienation and hatred. Now we can say without presumption, we love Him, because He first loved us; and we feel for His name and His honor. We desire to do His will, and to please Him; and this is the will of God, even our sanctification; for He has called us on terms of holiness, and we are ourselves taught of God to love one another: so the apostle has ruled.

Known salvation therefore, by God's grace in Christ our Lord, is the basis which the Holy Ghost lays for the walk of a child according to God. Nevertheless there is need for exhortation; and the

word is full of cheer or of warning; and the encouragements are varied and strong, to the end that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works. Perhaps it is not too much to say that, if His grace justifies us, our fidelity justifies Him, however poor our measure may be.

It may be well also to protest here against lowering this expression (to maintain good works), as if it only echoed ver. 14. It is not so. The expression may be similar; but the context is clear that the object of God differs in the two verses, as we shall see by and by. Undoubtedly ver. 14 has an important bearing; but it is of a narrower and lower character. In ver. 8 good works have nothing to do with “necessary uses,” and must be taken in all their extent. They are the honorable works, which become a believer, not benevolent merely but suitable to the objects of divine favor and of everlasting blessing, in a world where evil abounds and God is unknown save to faith.

It is also well to add that it is not believing in God merely as in the A. V., but “believing God.” They have set to their seal that God is true, having accepted His testimony. Therefore they bowed to His conviction wrought inwardly, that they were hateful and hating one another, but oh! how thankfully also that according to His mercy He saved; and that if all the Trinity concerned itself in this truly divine salvation, without the cross it was not possible. Christ suffering for sins had made it righteous for God to exercise His grace without stint; and the Holy Ghost can crown it with the richest enjoyment and with real power for practice.

“These things are good and profitable to men.” Here it need not be doubted that the apostle includes the maintenance of good works on the part of believers; but why should any wish to exclude the faithfulness of God's salvation from a still more direct and important place? The cause is surely of at least equal moment with the effect. In contrast with these good and profitable things the apostle bids Titus “shun foolish questionings and genealogies and strifes and fighting about law.” It is the same apostle who told Timothy, as indeed we all know, that the law is good if a man use it lawfully. How so? It is not made for a righteous man but for the lawless and unruly, an unsparing weapon against all evil. What will produce honorable works? Nothing but the gospel of the glory of the blessed God which was committed to Paul and pressed on Titus no less than Timothy. Here then the apostle denounces the misuse of the law. As it puffs up man who, ignorant of his sin and powerlessness, builds on it, so it engenders foolish questions and genealogies and strifes, and legal fightings. Gospel truths are “good and profitable to men “: legal squabbles are “unprofitable and vain “; and such is the misuse of law to which man's mind is ever prone, if indeed he pays any heed at all. The truth of the gospel, as it reveals grace, so it commands both heart and conscience of the believer. Where faith is not, there is the power of death unremoved, and darkness God-ward. Such is the race in its natural estate, which no rite can alter—only the Deliverer received in faith.

From questions dark or trifling and in either way unprofitable or even injurious, to which legalism tends, the apostle next warns of a still darker result which is too apt to appear, the uprising of party spirit in its most extreme shape, which scripture designates “heresy.” 1 Cor. 11:18, 19, is the first occurrence of the phrase α■ρεσις in the apostolic Epistles, which can alone precisely define its Christian application. “I hear that schisms exist among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that the approved may be made manifest among you.” Hence we learn how ordinary language differs from scripture. Men regard “heresy” as a departure from sound doctrine, which is apt to end in a separate party or sect characterized by it. In short they

regard “schism” as the severed result, whether with, as generally is the fact, or without, as may be, the heterodox root. Now the inspired word appears to me irreconcilable with such thoughts. “Schisms” already existed in the church at Corinth. As yet there were no “sects” or separate parties; but this the apostle regarded as inevitable. Splits within lead naturally, and, as men are, necessarily to splits without or sects. This was imminent at Corinth, unless grace gave self-judgment and thus nipped the bud, so that the evil fruit should not follow. But the danger was at work in the “schisms” that afflicted the Corinthian saints, though all as yet ate of the one loaf. If they did not repent, the issue would surely be “heresies” or sects, as in Gal. 5:20. It seems plain that the word in neither Epistle necessarily involves strange doctrine, however often this may be and is the animating spring of the party. The carnal preference, which set up Cephas against Paul, or Apollos against both, formed “schisms” in the assembly; and this, if not judged as sin, would issue at length in outward factions, or “heresies.” For such fleshly feeling ever grows more hot and intolerant, so that Christ the center of unity is overlooked, and the Spirit, being grieved, ceases to control those who are thus self-willed.

But there is another step in the path of evil, of which we find the expression in the Second Epistle of Peter (2:1). Here there is marked development; for we hear of false teachers (ψευδοδιδ■σκαλοι), who are characterized as bringing in privily “destructive heresies,” or sects of perdition (α■ρ■σεις ■πωλε■ας). The context is clear, in this case alone, that it is not only personal or party self will breaking away from the unity of the Spirit, but that the factions or heresies anticipated by the apostle have the darker dye of ruinous heterodoxy also. Not a hint of this appears in the usage of the word for the Galatians and the Corinthians, bad as the case in its mildest form is; because it ever is a violation of church unity. It is only when the term is contextually enlarged and weighted with the distinct imputation of false teaching that we can tax the “heretic” with heterodoxy. Hence the unbelieving cavils of De Wette, &c., have no real ground. The traditional and mistaken sense of a later day does not apply to the Pauline usage of α■ρεσις.

Now this is of importance in helping us to a true and just discernment of the apostle's injunction to Titus, where there is an advance in fact on the warnings to the Corinthians and the Galatians. It is supposed that there was, or might be, a heretic in Crete, who had to be dealt with. Such an one had gone out in the pride of his heart and was after admonition to be declined. “An heretical man after a first and second admonition refuse, knowing that such a one is subverted and sinneth, being self-condemned” (ver. 10, 11). Here the evil is not expressed in the aggravated form of false teaching; and consequently we are not entitled to lighten the sin of faction in itself, of which alone the passage speaks, by supplementing the case with the far more serious shape of it denounced by Peter at a later day. By “heretical man” the apostle means any one active in originating or adopting faction, even if he were orthodox. Not content with “schism” inside, they were forming a separate school without. They might, as a general rule, fall into destructive views, more or less diverging from those whom they had willfullya and deliberately left, in order to justify themselves or oppose others vainly. But the apostle does not add a word, either here or elsewhere, to the evil of “faction” or “sect” in itself. Titus was to admonish once or twice. For there might be differing measures in the self-will that had gone outside: one so determined that a first admonition would be proved enough; another not so far gone might encourage the Lord's servant to persevere and admonish a second time.

This also explains, at any rate in part, why there is not a word about putting away the evil-doer. Titus was to “eschew” or “avoid” him. Now παραιτο■; is said of shunning old wives' fables (1 Tim. 4:7), younger widows (v. 11), foolish and uninstructed questions (2 Tim. 3:23), as well as a heretic in the scripture before us. In no case is excommunication meant, but just avoiding, whether things or persons. It is granted that the Epistle does not embrace within its scope, like 1 Corinthians, all ecclesiastical action even to the last extremity; any more than excommunication is prescribed in the Epistle to the Galatians or in those to the seven Apocalyptic churches, whence the advocates for tolerating the worst evils within the assembly draw their unwise and unholy arguments.

But there is to be noticed another and more special reason why no such measure was to be laid on the church through Titus: the evil-doer had gone out. This is of the essence of “heresy,” whatever its form; in this lies its advance on and deduction from “schism.” Now how could you with propriety put away him who had already gone away? The utmost which could be done, when it was no mistake (perhaps with a right design yet an ill-guided conscience) but deliberate intention with willful slight and defiance of the assembly, would be to close the door formally, so that he could not enter fellowship again without as formal restoration. This in effect when it truly applied might be equivalent to excommunication; but it would bear on its front the stamping the offender with the fact of his own self will; while the assembly also would show itself not indifferent but vigilant and holy in the case. The assembly, by the Lord entrusted with the extreme act of putting away when God's word calls for it, does not overpass its responsibility in pronouncing on such a sin: the greater or at least more formal act includes what is less or akin. Some such action as this may be implied and inferred; but Waterland (Doctrine of Trin. ch. 4) goes too far in saying that the command to Titus contains as much. Still less is Vitringa (De Vet. Syn. 3. 1-10), after straining 2 Thessalonians and Rom. 16, warranted in making it= ■κβαλλε, the public excommunication following the admonition, or a private one as among the Jews, as Bp. Ellicott justly observes.

The truth is that the Holy Spirit applies in Gal. 5 to false doctrine the same solemn figure as He does in 1 Cor. 5 to immoral evil. It is leaven; and, where church action is enjoined, we are commanded to purge it from the assembly. Will any one contend that doctrinal leaven is to be kept in, and only immoral leaven is to be put out Evil doctrine is the worse and more ensnaring; and if man as man does not trouble about it, the more is it incumbent on the faithful to care for God's honor. “Holiness, O Lord, becometh Thine house forever.” Now that our Passover, Christ, has been sacrificed, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Let those who will have laxity speak out plainly and betray their evil aim, that we may at least keep ourselves pure.

Again, men who bring not the doctrine of Christ, and deny the Father and the Son, are branded by the most loving of the apostles as anti-Christ, whom we are forbidden to receive into the house or even to greet. This goes far beyond what is fairly and withal imperatively taught by the exclusion of leaven in the Pauline Epistles. It is a deeper evil striking at Christ's person, the Rock on which the church is built, and so demands a most prompt and thorough judgment for His sake, to say nothing of His people subtly imperiled by any tampering with them thereby.

Here Titus was simply to have done with an heretical man (leader or adherent is but a question of degree) after a first and second admonition. What follows confirms without constraint and thoroughly the difference of the case before us from ecclesiastical dealing: “Knowing that such a

one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned" (ver. 11). Whitby departs from scripture by adding, "is perverted from the true faith." 1 Tim. 1:19, 20, 2 Tim. 2:18, teach this, but not the passage in question, which marks the evil of faction apart from heterodoxy, though the two often go together. Nor does αὐτοκατάκριτος mean "condemned by his own conscience," but self-condemned, i.e., ipso facto, without saying a word of conscience, which may have been quite dull or darkened, instead of giving sentence against the man. He was self-condemned, because, liking his own will and perhaps notions too, he could no longer brook the atmosphere of God's assembly; he preferred to be outside God's habitation in the Spirit, to have a church of his own, or to be his own church. Now, as sin is lawlessness, so if one had as a denizen known that holy temple, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, to leave it (not forced out justly or unjustly) of his own will was to sin with a high hand and seal his own condemnation: words admirably suiting a deserter and self-exalting rival, but not by any means one whose sin had been solemnly judged and himself put away by the sentence of the church. In short, "heresy" simply, here and elsewhere in the Epistles, does not mean departure from the truth but from the assembly, which is its pillar and ground, where the Lord works by the Spirit to God's glory. It goes beyond "schism" which acts within, but it is not necessarily heterodox, though this is often added and likely to be its end.

Chapter 211

On Titus 3:12-15

The conclusion now follows. “When I shall send Artemas unto thee or Tychicus, give diligence to come unto me at Nicopolis, for there I have determined to winter. Set forward Zenas the lawyer and Apollos, on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting to them. And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All that are with me salute thee. Salute them that love us in faith. Grace be with you all” (ver. 12-15).

It is a common mistake to suppose that words, so simple and common-place as these seem, have little value. We learn what the goodness of the Lord is through such an one as Paul, not merely in circumstances of great strain and difficulty, but in the most ordinary matters of daily spiritual life. Grace molds the conduct and the words alike, in the least things as in the greatest; as there is no affectation, there is no levity. The consciousness of God's presence, the habit of having to do with Him, impresses the simplest affairs with a tone that is holy and loving without an effort.

But the fact is that in these closing words we have that which ought to have cleared up many a controversy and been corrective of spurious tradition. Titus was in no way the fixed ecclesiastical ruler of

Crete; be had served the Lord there in most important ways, and his work was come to a close as far as that island was concerned. The apostle was not indifferent; he desired spiritual help for the saints and assemblies still, and therefore he proposes to send Artemas or Tychicus before Titus leaves. The fact that one of these we know rather fully in the Acts of the Apostles, the other not at all elsewhere, is full of interest. We learn that there were men whom the Lord honored in a high degree who only appear incidentally like Artemas; and yet he is even put before Tychicus. It would be wrong to infer that he had a higher standing. The Holy Spirit does not regulate the affairs of God after the manner of a Lord Chamberlain. We may be assured that the apostle would not speak of sending Artemas or Tychicus, had he not believed that the one was no less spiritually qualified than the other. Comparisons however are not sanctioned in scripture. But we can also see that the apostle did not think of sending both—it is “Artemas or Tychicus,” not Artemas and Tychicus. Laborers suitable to help the church in a large way are not numerous. Other places had claims no less than Crete; but it is plain that both these laborers held a personal relation to the apostle. He proposed to send the one or the other to Titus in Crete: when either one or the other should have arrived, the apostle calls on Titus to be diligent in joining him at Nicopolis, “for there I have determined to winter.”

From this we learn some facts of interest to all Christians. The apostle was certainly not a prisoner at this time. It appears to have been after his first imprisonment at Rome, and before the second, which closed in his death. Had he not been free, how could he speak of his decision to spend a winter there? But this also convincingly shows us that the traditional appendix to the Epistle is unfounded. The Epistle was not written from Nicopolis, any more than Titus was ordained bishop of Crete. Again, there is no sufficient reason to assume that it was Nicopolis in Macedonia, even if that city then existed. For it is certain that various cities of that name were built after the days of

Paul—one or more by the emperor Trajan. Long before there was a Nicopolis in Alexandria, there was another Nicopolis in Cilicia. But the most important town of the name then existing, beyond a doubt, was in Epirus, looking down on a promontory of Actium in Acarnania, built by Augustus Caesar in honor of the great victory over Antony, which had such a momentous bearing on the future of the Roman empire. It seems therefore reasonable, as there is no particular description given pointing to another quarter, that the apostle means the city that was most notorious.

Further, we may be sure that the zeal which consumed the apostle did not now summon Titus there for rest to himself any more than to the younger workman. In the last Epistle the apostle ever wrote, it is said that Titus went to Dalmatia, which was in the neighborhood of Epirus. This again affords some confirmation that the Nicopolis in question lay in that neighborhood. The work of the Lord was to be pushed into the West as well as in the East.

Quite a distinct fact appears in the next verse, 13. “Set forward Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.” How beautifully unjealous love, and zeal for the Lord's glory and care for the comfort of His laborers, are shown here. And how confidently too Paul looks for this blessed feeling in Titus, the reflex of his own. Often and long he had proved him to be a faithful and gracious brother. He is sure that an elevated authority in Crete has in no way impaired the old spirit of fellowship and value for others.

It is the more to be noticed, because neither of these two commended to his care were at all so associated with the apostle personally as many others. We never hear of them (as το■ς περ■ τ■ν Πα■λον) in the group which accompanied the apostle on his journey. What is or is not said appears to indicate the co-ordinate class of laborers, of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles as well as in the Epistles, Apollos notably being their type. Yet the heart of the apostle goes out and urges Titus in love no less for such than for his well-known usual associates.

Here again Zenas the lawyer is named before Apollos: this is the order not of the world, but of grace. It is not quite certain what sort of lawyer he was. Calvin dryly considers that he could not have been a forensic one: else he could not have wanted means. A graver but simple if not conclusive reason points in the same direction. Everywhere else in the N. T. “lawyer” is connected with Jewish learning rather than Roman or Greek law. Certain it is that Paul assumes that there might be need of the help enjoined. He had accepted help of the kind himself, as appears from his Epistles, and before this he asked for it on behalf of others. We find the same thing in the still later Third Epistle of John. But it is a fine trait of Christ to see this gracious consideration laid so confidently on the shoulders of Titus, though the apostle does not stop there. “And let ours also learn to maintain good works for the necessities, that they be not unfruitful.” If Titus was not to forget fellow-laborers, how incumbent it was on the saints generally? This is the force of “ours also.” Only here of course “ours” means the saints in Crete. They are exhorted to learn, what Titus had long learned, to be forward in good works, and, among all other calls, for the encouragement of devoted ministers of the Lord in His work. It is not merely the poor we should think of but the work of faith and labor of love. Thus should believers be not “unfruitful.” Nor is God unrighteous to forget that work or the love shown toward His name; and if it be so in ministering to the saints, in special honor of those who serve them at all cost.

Lastly, we have the salutation “All that are with me salute thee;” it is not merely “with me” as in Gal. 1:2. It is special connection and simple companionship. This gives the salutation increase of force.

Again Paul directs Titus to salute “those that love us in faith.” Faith is the connecting link with all that is eternal and of the Spirit of God, yea with God Himself. His last word is not to Titus only, but “grace be with you all.” His heart breaks forth in the desire of divine blessing towards all the saints in Crete, as we know it did in a general yet practical way to all on earth. But the faithful stand in a special, divine, and everlasting relationship, which no saint ought ever to forget.

Chapter 212

The Transfiguration: Part 1

It must have been familiar with us all to have observed, that the certainty of our view of an object has depended very principally on the light in which it was set; and that our enjoyment of a prospect has been greatly determined by the way by which we approached it.

I venture thus to introduce my observation upon the transfiguration of our blessed Lord on the Holy Mount, because, as I judge, the way by which He was led there has not with sufficient care been traced out and preserved by those who since, in faith, followed Him there. The road was much longer to Him than we generally. suspect; and yet, to be on the mount with Him, so as to enter rightly through the Spirit into the design of His being there at all, we must be patient in marking the way which conducted Him to that secret place of His heavenly glory. We will then, trusting His guidance, track this way after Him somewhat more carefully.

It was apostasy in Israel that prepared “the place that is called Calvary;” and, under the determining hand and counsel of God, there erected the cross: so that the Lord Himself said to the Jews, “when YE have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He” (John 8:28). For the Son had been sent forth to preserve and reign over the house of Israel forever; but Israel would none of Him. Of course in all this the purpose of the counsels of God was only effected; but still the cross is the witness of Jewish unbelief; as is said, “For of a truth against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done” (Acts 4:27-28).

The cross therefore directly led to the casting off of Israel as God's people on earth; and to the consequent present call of the church out from among the Gentiles. Accordingly, in the progress of the Lord's ministry, as the Jews were at times betraying their unbelief, so was the Lord ever following this with the intimation (either to themselves, or in secret to His disciples) of the judgment for which this unbelief was preparing them; or of its further results in the call and edification of His body the church.

And if we but carefully trace His ministry, we shall at once discover this as one of its characters, and be led in this way: and I will say only in this way, justly to apprehend the purpose (most gracious in Him and blessed to them, and to the whole church with them, as it was) for which He ever took His favored disciples up to that heavenly hill with Him.

The Gospel of Matthew (as confessedly the completest narrative of our Lord's history) is that through which we will trace Him until He reach the mount of transfiguration in chapter 17; for I am assured that there is to be discovered, through all this part of His ministry and the circumstances attending it, that which was opening His way to that mount.

Everything previous to the imprisonment of John will be found to be only introductory to our Lord's ministry—i. e. all that is recorded by our evangelist, down to chap. iv. ver. 12. But the tidings “that John was cast into prison” drew Him forth; and we read, that “from that time, Jesus began to

preach.” Then did light spring up to them, which sat in the region and shadow of death; then did the Shepherd of Israel begin to feed the flock; and, unlike those who had come before Him, to strengthen the diseased, to heal the sick, to bind up the broken, and to seek the lost (Matt. 4:23-25, Ezek. 34:4).

In the three following chapters we have the sermon on the mount; the purpose of which I judge to be this—to reveal the Father in heaven (from whose glory the Son had come down) in connection with Israel; to exhibit the necessary characters of a people brought into this blessed connection; but at the same time, on the ground of the corruptions and hypocrisy of their present accredited fathers, to disclose, though as yet but darkly, the mystery of Israel's full apostacy and rejection, and the consequent call of an election from among them, and the opening of a new scene of blessing to them.

In chapter viii. the Lord pursues His ministry of mercy, and as yet He pursues it unhindered. Every step in His bright path of blessing, leaving behind it the traces of One who had come as “the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.” Chapter 9 however presents to us, for the first time, the enmity of the blind guides of Israel, “because their deeds were evil” against the light of Israel. The occasion for this first manifestation of their enmity and unbelief is very specially worthy of our notice. It is the case of the man sick of the palsy, who had been let down through the roof in order to meet the eye and compassion of the blessed Jesus; (see 9:1; Mark 2:1-4) “and Jesus,” as we read, “seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.” Here then the Lord, witnessing the faith of this little band of His people, at once proclaims remission of sins in Israel, and consequent healing—power on earth to forgive sins now manifested. The Jehovah of Israel now appeared among them, “forgiving all their iniquities, and healing all their diseases.” Every sickness and every plague had through disobedience been brought upon them (Deut. 28:61); but He who had once led them out of Egypt, was saying to them again, “I am the Lord that healeth thee.” (Ex. 15:26).

He was, as it were, renewing His covenant with them, His covenant of health and salvation; He was taking away from them all sickness and dispensing healing through the land (Deut. 7:15). Faith would have rejoiced and begun that song of praise prepared of old for repentant and believing Israel, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name; bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; Who forgiveth all thine iniquities and healeth all thy diseases” (Psa. 103). But Israel's guides and rulers, now thinking evil in their hearts, whispered, “This man blasphemeth.'' The enmity of the rulers thus, once awakened, worked more and more as the gracious Shepherd went on to gather “the poor of the flock.” Thus we find Him immediately afterward calling Matthew the publican, and sitting at meat in company with sinners, and the rulers rebuking Him for this grace that was in Him. But it was that grace of the divine physician which they all equally needed: yet, ignorant of this, they were vainly and fatally to themselves making sin the occasion of judging, and comparing as among themselves, instead of knowing and confessing that “the whole head was sick and the whole heart faint.” They had now been smitten according to the curse on disobedience (Deut. 28:28) with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart, as every city and village of theirs, through which Jehovah their healer was now passing, witnessed, but knew it not. The Lord their God was even now showing them that He would not contend forever; for though He had seen their ways and the frowardness of their hearts, yet that He had come to heal them (Isa. 57:18). He was now showing that for the hurt of

the daughter of His people He was hurt, and that balm was now to be found in Gilead, and a physician there; but the daughter of His people was refusing health (Jer. 8:21, 22). The enmity still working, the fairest and most favored portion of Israel next came forward with their challenge, “the disciples of John;” they who had been under the ministry of him, than whom, among those born of woman, there had not risen a greater—the burning and the shining light of Israel in his day. In answer to them the Lord darkly intimates the mystery hid from ages and from generations, and for the full disclosure of which the unbelief of Israel was thus gradually making way. He speaks to them of the strange act of the bridegroom's removal (Israel having heard out of the law only of Christ's “abiding forever"); and with this gives them notice, as by a parable of Israel's apostasy and consequent rejection as an old garment, and as a vessel in which there was soon to be no pleasure; and the Lord's consequent election of another witness of His grace and blessing (Matt. 9:14-17).

Chapter 11 begins by telling us that when the Lord had thus given them this commission, He Himself in like manner departed “to teach and to preach in their cities.” But that chapter does not close until we listen to Him, in all the grace of ill-requited and as it were disappointed love, upbraiding those cities “because they repented not.” “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tire and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes” (ver. 21). But sad to His soul as this view of the unbelief of Israel must have been, He finds His relief in the consciousness of the stability of the Father's purpose; in this, as Paul did afterward, that the foundation of God still stood sure, and that therefore there would be still a gathering to Him of all those whom the Father foreknew, and who should hear His voice as the good Shepherd, saying, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden.”

In the next chapter we see the Jews still further manifesting their unbelief, by the Pharisees holding a council against Him how they might destroy Him; (ver. 14); and again by saying of Him, the gracious physician who was forgiving all their sins and healing all their diseases, spending His love and His strength upon them throughout all their coasts, “This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils:” (ver. 24); and again, by desiring to see a sign from Him (ver. 38). In the course of His reply to this last expression of unbelief, our Lord gives them solemn and full warning of the judgment they were hastening upon themselves, shutting them up under the condemnation of the sign of the prophet Jonah.

Jonah is, generally, the witness of burial and resurrection. Thus does He set forth the mysterious history of the blessed Son of Man Himself— “For 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” (ver. 40). But the sign of Jonah equally sets forth the history of Israel; inasmuch as that nation is now doomed to the judgment of death and the grave: but in the purpose of the love of God, it is destined to be called forth from under the power of death, and to rise again into the life and liberty of God's people (see Ezek. 37:1-14). But for the present they are in the grave; that unrepentant generation which was thus challenging the Lord for a sign was laid there; for there the Lord solemnly consigned them when He thus gave them the sign of the prophet Jonah. And when He had thus delivered them over to the judgment of death and the grave, He discloses to them, in the parable of the unclean spirit, that fullness of iniquity which they were to accomplish, and which would mature them for the full judgment of God. “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" (vers. 43-45).

Israel had been once possessed with an unclean spirit. Before the Babylonish captivity, the idols had defiled that land where Jehovah had set His own name and the witness of His presence; but this unclean spirit had now gone out of Israel: the house was swept, and emptied, and garnished; the altars, and the groves, and the images were no more. But this was all. God had not been restored to His place there: idolatry had now yielded to the spirit of scorning and unbelief. The Lord came, but there was no man; "He came to His own, but His own received Him not" (John 1:11). And thus into this empty house the full, or sevenfold, energy of Satan had entered—the unclean spirit had taken with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and was preparing to dwell there;; and so has he since dwelt. The god of this world has blinded the nation to the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and they continue to this day to deny the Son of Man, and to leave their last state worse than the first.

The next chapter begins to present our Lord as a teacher with a new style and manner; He opens His mouth in parables and utters dark sayings of old, and on being questioned by His disciples, why was it thus? He answered and said unto them, "Because it is given unto you to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given; for whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables, because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand; and in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias which saith, By hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." This change of manner in the ministry of this blessed and perfect master in Israel was thus awfully judicial: He had spoken to them plainly, and spoken no proverb; but when He had thus called, there was none to answer, and now, as the Lord in judgment, He began to pour out on them the spirit of deep sleep and to close their eyes, that the scripture might be fulfilled which saith, "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, read this I pray thee, and he saith, I am not learned" (Isa. 29:11, 12).

We are too careless in marking all the actions of the blessed Jesus: Among ourselves the eye and ear of a friend will discover in little things the heart of him with whom friendship has made us familiar; and how does the Holy Ghost trace for the saints the less discovered paths of the Spirit of Jesus when oil earth, so that when once let into the secret of communion with Him, we may see Him where the sharpest eye of this world's wisdom would never have discovered His path! "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him" (Psa. 25:14). Now we read after this (chap. xiv. 13), that when Jesus heard of the death of John the Baptist, "He departed thence by ship into a desert place apart." This action of the Lord is full of meaning. The murder of that righteous man was a

chief matter in filling up the measure of the nation's sin; it was the sure witness of their deep revolt from God. They had done with God's servant “whatsoever they listed,” served the last of their own evil hearts upon him, instead of receiving him as the messenger of the Lord of Hosts to them. And what ripeness for judgment was just then exhibited among them! Only mark the scene in Herod's palace at that time, what a living in pleasure was there and being wanton! what a nourishing of the heart as in a day of slaughter, did the court of Israel's king then present!

(To be continued.)

Chapter 213

The Transfiguration: Part 2

Herod's birth-day was kept: the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine were in the feast, and the blood of the righteous was mingled with it all. The just was condemned and killed, but there was to be no resistance—no present redress. The sin of Babylon was found in Jerusalem, and more than the sin of Babylon. It was a feast full of more horrid rites than that which drew forth the hand-writing of death upon the wall, to seal the fate of Belshazzar and his kingdom. The vessels of the temple were profaned there, but in Jerusalem the blood of the righteous was shed. But there was no second hand-writing: the Lord came not to break the bruised reed, nor to quench the smoking flax; He came not to visit Israel's sin upon them. And so we read, that when He had heard of this deed which so stained their land, “He departed into a desert place apart,” His spirit thus leading Him away from the view of the nation's sin (which was not as yet to call forth His right hand from His bosom) to pursue, as we find, His patient labors of mercy through their land, though they were thus rewarding Him evil for good, and hatred for His love.

In tracing further the ministry of the Lord, we find Him in Matthew (chap. 15.) brought into view again of other evidence of Jewish apostasy, such as showed that all their worship had been now turned to vanity; that, loving the praise of men rather than the praise of God, they were honoring man in his traditions, and, for the sake of this, forsaking God and His commandments. And thus were they forsaking their own mercy, and, traveling on in the darkness of this world, they knew not whither they were going, and would speedily stumble, and be snared, and taken.

Thus witnessing all the way the deepening of Jewish unbelief, and the settling of the purpose of their revolted heart not to receive Him, we are at length conducted to that scene in the Lord's ministry which prepares for His ascent without further delay up the holy mount. On His again being challenged to show the sign from heaven (15:1), after upbraiding them with their hypocrisy, we read that He “left them and departed.” Another action of the Lord, big with judgment, had this voice, that the time was at hand when they should be judicially deserted of God. We find that He pursued this solemn journey of separation from them, till He reached the coast of Caesarea Philippi, the most distant corner of the land. Here we must pause with Him, and meditate on this most interesting moment of His ministry, when He, having taken up this lonely and remote position, judicially separating Himself as far as He could from all Jewish associations and recollections, breaks open both to the eye and ear of His disciples the secret that had been hid from ages and from generations, that is, the special and distinctive glory which in the purpose of God had been of old ordained for His church.

Here in the solitudes of Caesarea Philippi, the Lord, as we read, “asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?” By this He designed (closing His controversy with them) to draw forth the full and formal proof of the nation's unbelief, of their having failed or refused to discover in Him the light that was to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of His people Israel. And such was now drawn forth; for the disciples, who had been more than their Lord mixed with the multitudes, and had known their present ways, could only say, “Some say that thou

art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias; or one of the prophets." But they had no tidings to bring Him that any had echoed the joy of the prophet, "To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given;" that they had ever heard, through their towns and villages, one saying, "I am the Lord's; and another calling himself by the name of Jacob; and another subscribing with his hand to the Lord, and surnaming himself by the name of Israel" (Isa. 44:5). His hand was as strong now for them, as when He rode with His chariots of salvation through the sea, and covered the Egyptian heavens with sackcloth; but there was none (Isa. 1:1, 2). Israel did not know, the people did not consider, that the Heir of the vineyard was refused and disallowed by the husbandman.

Thus was the earth shut upon Him; for His earthly throne, by His own ancient decree, was set in Zion (Psa. 2:6). The people of the earth had rejected Him. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not; He came to His own, and His own received Him not." And now was the time for His unveiling another and hitherto hidden region. The heavens must open if earth be shut to Him and His people. If the key of the house of David laid upon His shoulder cannot as yet be used to give Him entrance to His inheritance of the fullness of the earth, the keys of the kingdom of heaven must open the glories and joys of heaven to Him and His church. And therefore, as we read, the Lord, designing to draw this forth of His elect, and to bring it into direct contrast with the unbelief of Israel, said to the disciples, "But whom say ye that I am?" And so He did draw this forth; for Peter, as confessing the faith of the body of Christ, the faith of the family that belongs to the Father in heaven, "answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." For this is just the knowledge by which the heavenly family have their very being: "he that hath the Son hath life." And the body of Christ is fashioned by the power of the Holy Ghost imparting this faith, and will have its full edification when all the elect have by the same Spirit been brought into this faith; as it is written, "till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God onto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

And the Lord therefore at once acknowledged this confession to be the confession of the church; the proper faith of all those who have had the Son revealed to them by the Father in heaven, and are thus made one with Christ in the present love wherewith He is loved and in the coming glory wherewith He is to be revealed. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (ver. 17-19).

Here then, for the first time, the Son and the church—the destined Bridegroom and Bride are manifested in the presence of each other; here do they for the first time salute each other, and enter into that fellowship of knowledge and those blessed embraces of love which shall endure forever. Then did the church in Spiritising, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine;" and the Son could rejoice in opening to His brethren the very heavens themselves, and giving them seats with Himself in the Father's house. In His esteem, as it were, the earth was too low for them, and the heavens must open to them. His members should be fashioned here, but the body in its perfectness should find its place forever on high. The throne and not the footstool should be theirs.

I do believe there was no moment like this in the ministry of our blessed Master. This was the great moment of transition from earth to heaven: the one was refusing its increase to God, and would now cast out the Heir of all its fullness; the other was preparing a throne for Him, and for all who would love and adhere to Him in this scornful and rejecting world.

Thus can we discern, during the ministry of our Lord, the unfoldings of that character and unbelief in Israel which carried His prospects, if I may so speak, from earth to heaven; and so are we able to trace that way which conducted His steps to the distant coasts of Caesarea Philippi; and from thence, as we shall presently see, up the heavenly ascent of the Mount of Transfiguration.

The earth being thus, as He now saw, closed upon Him, the Lord begins, as we read, from that time to reveal the wonder of His death; which was the finishing of the earth's sin, and its rejection of God. It was a circumstance in the history of their Messiah that lay quite beyond all Jewish calculations, that was beside His character as Son of David in which Israel knew Him. This was the time, therefore (the Son of David being thus disowned by Israel), for the Lord to speak fully and openly to His disciples of His death. “From that time forth began Jesus to show onto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day” (ver. 21).

But here, alas, how far below the power of His own blessed confession so lately made, does the apostle come! Like Abram of old, he had just come out, as it were, from his home and kindred on earth, in the energy of the faith of the Son of God, which was really separating him unto the heavenly glory; but, like Abram, how soon the world and the god of this world has him under the power of his own spirit (see Gen. 12). “Then Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee. But He turned and said onto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan, thou art an offense unto Me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (vers. 22,. 23).

Could Peter promise himself that his Master would be anything but a sufferer in a world which had thus been manifesting its rejection of God? And should Peter, or those whom Peter's confession represents, look for any portion for themselves in a world which has now rejected the Son, and is still saying that they will not have Him to reign over them? It is only of Satan that the love of it can savor, and thus it cannot abide in the same heart with the love of the Father. The saints through the Holy Ghost have met the Father in affection, in the person of the Son; and the world by the spirit of the wicked one is at enmity with the Father, by still refusing to kiss the Son, counting that there is no beauty that they should desire Him.

In accordance with this reprobate character of the world, the Lord shows His disciples, drawn to Him in spirit out of it, what their suffering condition must also needs be while in it. “Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me; for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.” But at the same time He graciously sustains them thus called to be His suffering followers, with a promise of reward in the glory of His kingdom; a glory too, which He at the same time intimates to be far above all Jewish measures or expectations of glory, being “of the Father.” “For,” says the Lord to them, “what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? for the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works.”

And so great, so wondrous, so exceeding all previous calculations, was this “glory of the Father,” which He now speaks of, that He gives His disciples a very solemn pledge of it, promising them (in terms most strikingly expressive of the deep and interesting value of it) a sight of this glory. Thus by the two witnesses, as it were, His prophecy and their vision of it, the thing must be adjudged to be no “cunningly devised fable,” but be established in their faith, and ever live in the remembrance of His church, till the day itself dawned, and till the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the majesty of His kingdom, should rest no longer in vision or in promise, but be manifested to the everlasting satisfaction of all who wait for it. “Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

Accordingly this gracious pledge He quickly redeems. As we read, “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Then wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid: and Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid: and when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only” (Matt. 17:1-8).

(Continued from page 100.)

(To be continued.)

Chapter 214

The Transfiguration: Part 3

Now the single purpose of the Lord in giving Peter, James, and John this vision in the holy mount, was, as I have thus been endeavoring to show, to give His church a sight or sample of that heavenly glory which is their inheritance, and which is quite beside and above all previously expected glories, quite of another character from all the promises of glory made by Jehovah to Israel. The secret of God was here in vision disclosed to these favored disciples; the heavenly Jerusalem stood with her opened gates before them for a little passing moment; and though the disciples were then but “eye witnesses” standing on the earth, still in flesh and blood, and separated from that which they were beholding, they were afterward, through the Holy Ghost, taught to know that their portion was to be in that glory, that they were to take the better place of Moses and Elias with the Lord (2 Peter 1). And thus they might have seen, reflected in Moses and Elias glorified with the royal Son of Man, the inheritance of the saints in light, the hope of the calling of the Father of glory, the glory given to the Son, and imparted by the Son to the church, that they might be one with Him in it forever (Eph. 1:17, John 17:22).

Peter's joy in the presence of this glory, and his desire to continue there (such was the satisfying delight which his soul was taking in the scene), may give us to know something of the character of the blessedness of Israel and the nations continuing in natural bodies, “of the earth earthly,” in the kingdom of the Son of Man when this His glory shall appear. But all this was merely incidental. The single purpose of the vision was to show the church her portion in the glory, and not to let Israel know their joy merely in the presence of it. The church's high calling of God in Christ Jesus was that which was to be established by this vision. The God of all grace has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus; and this was then exhibited. Accordingly the transfiguration passed on the Lord, on Moses and Elias—they all appeared in the same glory. Moses and Elias were no more, as they were once on earth, than was the Lord Himself: their vile bodies had been fashioned like unto His glorious body; and He, then appearing for a little time, they also appeared in glory with Him.

But what a mystery was this, that they should be fellow-heirs and of the same body! In other ages it was not made known to the sons of men, but now was manifested, visibly manifested; so that, as we may say, we have seen it with our eyes and have looked upon it. But truly it was so strangely excellent, so far surpassing the thoughts even of these chosen ones of Israel, that it was worthy of this solemn pledge and assurance, in order that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God, and have strong consolation who have fled to this hope set before us. And oh that this was more and more our consolation! Oh that we abounded in the hope of this!—that our anchors were more firmly cast within the veil, and that we were more with desire wishing for the day! And not only were the saints in their glorified bodies exhibited in that holy mount, but the enfolding of the church with her blessed Head in the cloud of the excellent glory was seen there also. The promised “glory of the Father,” of which the Lord had spoken (xvi. 27), and in which He is to come when He brings His reward with Him, now descends on that holy hill. Surely this was none other than the house of God—the house where mansions are preparing for the saints in the Father's

presence.

In that presence are the saints to be presented without spot; and then will they know the blessing which ear hath not heard nor the heart conceived. There will be the presence that refreshes, and the happy service of the redeemed day and night before the throne, while He that sitteth thereon is dwelling among them. There shall they see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. But “the blood of the Lamb” will have washed them and made them meet for this their inheritance in light. And therefore do we find that when Moses and Elias spake with the Lord in the Mount, they spake of “His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31). And how suited was this also to rebuke Peter, who had so lately rebuked his Master for speaking in this manner of His decease! In glory they speak of it, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.” Oh what has made entrance for the glory, but the sufferings of Christ which it follows! The way to it has been opened by the nails and the spear, and the precious blood tracks it out for us all.

And here too we learn the secret of the disciples' fears in the presence of this excellent glory. “They feared as they i.e. the Lord and Moses and Elias (see Luke 9:34) entered into the cloud.” For nothing will strengthen us to stand assured in the presence of the glory, but the knowledge of the humiliation of Christ; and this Peter and they who were with him knew not then. His humiliation is the only but the sure (most blessed) ground of fellowship with even the excellent glory; for it assures us that all that which this glory would have otherwise found in us to judge and to consume has been already judged and put away in Him Who bore all our shame. And this was most graciously assured to the disciples on this very occasion. For Jesus came to them, amazed and confounded as they were, and with a voice and touch of Son of Man restored them. And these were the signs of His humiliation: the voice and the touch could tell them that He, who was in the form of God, was found in fashion as a man like themselves, and that they need not fear. As in a like ease, the glory of God being found in the person of the Son of Man, the conscious patriarch could say, “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” The majesty of the God of heaven was not therefore his destruction (Gen. 32:30). So the prophet's comeliness was turned into corruption, and he retained no strength in the presence of the same majesty; but he knew in himself that he was strengthened when the hand of one, in the appearance of a man, had touched him (Dan. 10:18). And thus it is ever; the divine terror shall not make us afraid, nor the hand of the Almighty be heavy upon us (though of old it meted out heaven and measured the waters, and gathered the winds,) if we know Him, Who has been formed out of the clay like ourselves, and is according to our wish in God's stead” (Job 33:6, 7).

And it was with this humiliated One that the disciples again (it might be too soon) found themselves alone, “when they lifted up their eyes,” —not knowing but that they should still behold the excellent glory. “But they saw no man save Jesus only.” Jesus! the title of all which men despised and rejected, the sign of the carpenter's son, of Him who belonged to Galilee, the Nazarene. With such an One did they now find themselves alone. The vision was yet to be for an appointed time; the glory had been folded up and was departed; and they were still to know only fellowship with Him Whom man was despising and the nation abhorring.

And with Him should we be walking still. And oh! for more and more power, through the holy Ghost, to know this blest companionship—companionship in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. For though we know not how short, yet still the vision is for an appointed time; but then in

the end it shall speak and not lie. The glory is within the vail, but will surely come forth and not tarry; and all who have waited for it, and are in the power of the secret of it, shall find it to be their salvation, while it is consuming all things beside. Gideon and the host of Israel stood, for they were in the secret of the Lord, when the glory shone forth from the broken pitchers; but the host of Midian—the army of the aliens—cried and fled, and were discomfited. J. G. B.

(Concluded from page 117.)

Chapter 215

The True Grace of God

There is not a single doctrine of scripture that is met by so much repugnance in the human mind as the truth of divine grace. This opposition is not confined to unconverted persons only; for the very same disposition, if discerned, will be found to operate in the minds of those who are renewed by the grace which, in measure, is opposed and denied. It is not that the necessity of grace is altogether disallowed a certain degree of it is admitted, as essential to acceptance with God. This even the Pharisee himself could allow, who thanked God for the difference between himself and others. But its absoluteness and completeness, i.e., its real and divine character, finds an unwilling reception in the heart.

It will be found, I imagine, on strict inquiry, that the substitution of our own feelings and natural apprehensions, in the place of an absolute and simple faith in God's testimony, has much to do with wrong and inadequate views of God's grace. The natural bias of the mind (acquired, it may be, and strengthened by, systematic exhibitions of truth) goes very far in restricting the breadth and freedom of thought in the divine word; and makes it a very hard thing for a man to “become a fool that he may be wise.”

Two things are exceedingly needful to be understood and kept in prominence, in order to the right apprehension of grace, viz., what the nature of man is, and has been proved to be, under the various trials to which it has been subjected in the dispensations of God; and the real nature and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, as God's fall and blessed and only remedy for all this proved and manifested evil in man.

It is comparatively an easy thing to dwell on the sense of personal evil, and to confess in humiliation the workings of a corrupt nature; but it is exceedingly difficult to connect the conscious evil of the flesh with all that has been discovered by God to exist in that flesh, from the day of its first murderous outbreak in Cain until its enmity found its worst vent in the rejection and murder of God's only Son. If it were kept in mind that it is the very same nature which failed in Eden, and filled the earth with violence before the flood, which turned to the baseness of idolatry in the newly-peopled world, and exhibited itself in the filthiness of Sodom, which wrought in rebellion against the law of God when He thus dealt with the Jew, which, finally, in Jew and Gentile joined in crucifying God's Son when He was sent into the world—it would go far towards clearing the ground for the admission of grace in all its fullness and perfectness, as presented in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

If my apprehensions of sin are limited by the discoveries I may have made of my own evil, and are not corrected by the results of God's dealing with man, brought to an issue in the guilt of the cross, I shall stop far short of the proved abomination and wickedness of the flesh; and shall in the same measure practically fall short of a just estimate of the riches of God's grace—that “true grace of God wherein we stand.”

It is this which constitutes the special evil of wrong and inadequate thoughts of grace; it disparages God's infinite goodness, and the value of Christ's work.

It is a right thing for a Christian to be desiring holiness, and to be mourning over his want of conformity to Christ; but what is it that gives the power of holiness, and what produces practical transformity to Christ?

The grace of God is not merely negative in its operations. There is a transforming power in the very gaze of the soul on Him, through Whose grace we are saved, and Who is the object of God's delight.

The true character of this grace can never be maintained in the soul, apart from walking in the abiding sense of the presence of the Lord. Out of that presence I lack the light that manifests it, and the darkness of the world produces a dullness of the faculties that apprehend it.

It is the province of faith to be continually lifting up our souls out of this world, and all that is passing around us and within us, and to show us things—the only realities—in the light of God.

And it is just as we get above the region of sense, and are acted upon by the realities of faith, that we are established in grace, and that our comfort and joy as the children of God are advanced, and our walk and ways here are according to God.

What we are as the children of God can only be known to faith; and the infinite depths of grace, and the bright prospects of glory, are laid open solely to the eye of faith.

It is a true and blessed fruit of the Father's grace “that we should be called children of God"; but then it is added, “therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.” It is not in the scope of the world's knowledge to know the children of God.

But this knowledge is essential to all who would walk as the children of God. Without it, yea, without the constant exercise of soul on this blessed truth, there cannot be the taking or the maintaining of our right place in the world, as exhibiting the grace that is to be God's witness to the world, “blameless and harmless, the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” “Beloved, now are we children of God.”

What we are is necessary to be known and cherished in the soul as the power and ground of exhibiting what we should be. It was so with the Lord. Had He not been what He was, His whole course through the world would have been altered by it. Could He have forgotten or denied His unique claim to be the Son of God, then (I speak not of His work only) His whole character and ways would have sunk to another level in the world.

But this is a truth known and admitted by us all. Still faith needs to be strengthened against the continual contradiction of the world and sense, and our hearts to be recalled to the grace in which we stand.

Chapter 216

Unity

Popish unity attaches Christ to unity, and hence may and does legalize with His name every corruption and evil. Christianity attaches unity to Christ, and therefore gives it all the character of grace and truth that is in Him—gives it all its excellence.

Chapter 217

What Do I Learn From Scripture?

The following paper was drawn up, on the request being made to the writer, to give a statement of his faith.

It was replied that the writer would not sign a confession of faith [even] which he had drawn up himself; that all human statement of truth was so inferior to scripture, even when drawn from it, that he could not do it. And the thawing up of this has only the more convinced him of it.

In the first place, there might be important points left out, or that put in which had better not be there. And, supposing everything right that was there, it was like a made tree instead of a growing tree. The word gives truth in its living operations. It is giving in connection with God, with man, with conscience, with divine life, and is thus a totally different thing. To use another image, it is not the growing tree, but, supposing all there, sticks laid up in bundles. The writer had, however, no objection personally to say what he believed—to give an answer when asked the question. What follows is given with a deeper conviction than ever of the imperfection of a human assemblage of truth. The writer adds that there are many things more which he should teach; but he could say, “I believe this; I have learned this from scripture.”

I learn from the Scriptures that there is one living God,1 fully revealed to us in Christ,2 and known through Him as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, 3 in the unity of the Godhead,4 but revealed as distinctively willing, 5 acting, 6 sending, sent, 7 coming,8distributing,9 and other actings, or, as habitually expressed among Christians, three persons in one God, or Trinity in Unity. God is the Creator of all things, but the act of creating is personally attributed to the Word and the Son, and the operation of the Spirit of God.10 I learn that the Word, who was with God and was God, was made flesh and dwelt among us, 11 the Father sending the Son to be the Savior of the world, 12—that He, as the Christ, was born of a woman, 13 by the power of the Holy Spirit coming on the virgin Mary, 14 true man, 15 without sin, 16 in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, 17 the promised seed of David according to the flesh,18 the Son of Man, 19 and Son of God, 20 determined to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, 21 one blessed Person, God and man, 22 the man Christ Jesus, 23 the anointed man, 24 Jehovah the Savior. 25 I learn that He died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 26 having appeared once in the consummation of ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, 27 that He has borne our sins in His own body on the tree, suffering for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, 28 and that He is our righteousness before God. 29 I learn that He is risen from the dead, 30 raised by God, by Himself, by the glory of the Father, 31 and ascended up on high, 32 having by Himself purged our sins, and sits at the right hand of God. 33 I learn that after Christ’s ascension the Holy Spirit has been sent down to dwell in His people individually and collectively, so that in both ways they are the temple of God. 34 We are sealed 35 and anointed with this Spirit, 36 the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts; 37 we are led by Him, 38 and He is the earnest of our inheritance; 39 we cry, Abba, Father, knowing we are sons. 40 I learn that Christ will come again to receive us to Himself, 41 raising those that are His, or changing them if

living, fashioning their bodies like His glorious body, according to the power by which He is able to subdue all things to Himself, 42 and that those of them who die meanwhile will depart and be with Him. 43 I learn that God has appointed a day in which He will judge this habitable world in righteousness by that Man whom He has ordained, whereof He has given assurance unto all men, in that He has raised Him from the dead, 44 and that at the end He will sit on the great white throne and judge the dead, small and great. 45 I learn that every one of us shall give an account of himself to God 46 and receive the things done in the body, whether they be good or evil, 47 and as the righteous inherit eternal life, 48 so the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, will go into everlasting punishment, be cast into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and that whosoever is not found in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire. 49 I learn that this blessed one, the Lord Jesus Christ, died for all, has given Himself a ransom for all, testified in due time, 50 that He has made propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the whole world.

I learn that He has thereby obtained an eternal redemption, 51 and that by one offering of Himself once for all the sins of all that believe on Him are purged, 52 and that by faith in Him their consciences are also purged, 53 and God remembers their sins and iniquities no more 54—that being called of God, they receive the promise of an eternal inheritance, 55 being perfected forever, so that we have boldness to enter into the holiest by His blood, by the new and living way He has consecrated for us. 56 I learn that to enter into the kingdom of God we must be born of water and the Spirit, born again, 57 being naturally dead in sins, and by nature children of wrath. 58 That which God employs in order to our being born again is His Word. 59 Hence it is by faith that we become His children. 60 I learn that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall have everlasting life, 61 but that to this end, God being a righteous and holy God, the Son of Man had to be lifted up upon the cross 62—that there He bore our sins in His own body on the tree 63 and was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. 64 I learn that He loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. 65 I learn that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy and without blame before Him in love. 66 I learn that those who believe are sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is the earnest of our inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession; 67 that by Him the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts; 68 that we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; 69 that they who have received this Spirit not only cry, Abba, Father, but know that they are in Christ, and Christ in them; that thus not only He appears in the presence of God for them, but they are in Him who is sitting at the right hand of God, expecting till His enemies be made His footstool; 70 that they are dead to sin in God’s sight, and to reckon themselves so; having put off the old man, and put on the new; alive to God through Jesus Christ (Christ is their new life); crucified to the world, and dead to the law. 71 I learn thus that if they are in Christ, Christ is in them, and they are called upon to manifest the life of Jesus in their mortal flesh 72 and to walk as He walked,73 God having set them in the world as the epistles of Christ, 74 whose grace is sufficient for them, and whose strength is made perfect in their weakness. 75 I learn that they are converted to wait for God’s Son from heaven 76 and are taught to do so, and that they have the promise that they shall never perish, nor shall any man pluck them out of Christ’s hand, 77 but that

God will confirm them to the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 78 I learn that they have part in these privileges through faith in Christ Jesus, in virtue of which righteousness is imputed to them; 79 that Christ, who has obeyed even unto death and wrought a perfect work upon the cross for them, 80 is now their righteousness, made such of God to them, 81 and that we are made the righteousness of God in Him; 82 that as His precious blood cleanses us from all sin, so we are personally accepted in the Beloved, 83 that as by one man's disobedience many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of One many shall be constituted righteous. 84 I learn that we are sanctified, or set apart to God, by God the Father, through the offering of Jesus Christ once for all, and by the operation and power of the Holy Spirit through the truth, so that all Christians are saints, 85 and that in our practical state we have to follow after holiness 86 and grow up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, being changed into His image, to whom we are to be perfectly conformed in glory. 87 I learn that the Lord has left two rites, or ordinances, both significative of His death; one initiatory, the other of continual observance in the church of God—baptism and the Lord's supper. 88 I learn that, when Christ ascended up on high, He received gifts for men, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, and that from Christ the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, makes increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love. 89 I learn that, as the grace and sovereign love of God is the source and origin of all the blessing, 90 so continual and diligent dependence on that grace is that by which we can walk after Him and to His glory, who has left us an example that we should follow His steps. 91 I learn from the example and authority of the Lord and His apostles that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are inspired of God, and are to be received as the Word of God, having His authority attached to it, and which works effectually in those that believe, 92 and that the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart, being understood, not by the wisdom of man, but by the teaching of God, being spiritually discerned; they are revealed, communicated and discerned by the Spirit. 93 I learn that, while God alone is immortal in and by Himself, 94 the angels are not subject to death, 95 and that the death of a man does not affect the life of his soul, be he wicked or renewed, but that all live still as to God, though dead, 96 and that the wicked will be raised again as well as the just. 97 I learn that every assembly of God is bound by the exercise of discipline, according to the Word, to keep itself pure in doctrine and godly walk. 98

J. N. Darby

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2. John 1:18.

3. Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; Eph. 2:18.

4. John 5:19; 1 Cor. 12:6.

5. John 6:38-40; 5:21; 1 Cor. 12:11.

6. John 5:17; 1 Cor. 12:11.

7. John 14:26; 15:26; 5:24,37; 1 Peter 1:12; 1 John 4:14.

8. John 15:26; 16:7-8,13.

9. 1 Cor. 12:11.

10. Gen. 1:1-2; Job 26:13; John 1:1,3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2.

11. John 1:1-2,14.

12. John 4:14.

13. Gal. 4:4.

14. Luke 1:35.

15. Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14,17; 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7.

16. Luke 1:35; 1 John 3:5.

17. Col. 2:9.

18. Rom. 1:3; Acts 2:30; 13:23; 2 Tim. 2:8.

19. Matt. 16:13.

20. John 1:18,34.

21. Rom. 1:4.

22. Phil. 2:6-10; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Heb. 1-2; 1 John 2:23-3:3; 5:20; Rev. 22:12-13; John 1:1,14; 8:58, and many others.

23. 1 Tim. 2:5.

24. Acts 10:38.

25. Matt. 1:21. The word Christ or Messiah means “anointed,” and Jesus or Joshua, “Jehovah” or “Jah the Savior.”

26. 1 Cor. 15:3.

27. Heb. 9:26.

28. 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18.

29. 1 Cor. 1:30; Heb. 9:24.

30. 1 Cor. 15:20; Matt. 28:6, and many others.

31. Acts 3:15; John 2:19; Rom. 6:4; Eph. 1:20.

32. Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Eph. 4:8-10, and others.

33. Heb. 1:3; 10:12; Eph. 1:20-21, and others.

34. John 16:7; 7:39; Rom. 8:9; the Father sends, John 14:26; Christ sends from the Father, John 14:16-17,26; Rom. 8:11; l Cor. 6:19; 3:16; Eph. 2:22; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:30; 1:23.

35. Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:22.

36. 2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 2:20,27.

37. Rom. 5:5.

38. Rom. 8:14.

39. Eph. 1:14; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5.

40. Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6.

41. John 14:3.

42. 1 Thess. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:23,51-52; Phil. 3:20-21.

43. 2 Cor. 5:8; Luke 23:43; Acts 7:59.

44. Acts 17:31.

45. Rev. 20:11-12.

46. Rom. 14:12.

47. 2 Cor. 5:10.

48. Rom. 6:22-23; Matt. 25:46.

49. 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:15.

50. 2 Cor. 5:14; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 John 2:2.

51. Heb. 9:12.

52. Heb. 1:3; 9:22; 10:2.

53. Heb. 9:14; 10:2.

54. Heb. 10:17.

55. Heb. 9:15.

56. Heb. 10:14,19-20.

57. John 3:3,5.

58. Eph. 2:1,3; 2 Cor. 5:14.

59. James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23.

60. Gal. 3:26.

61. John 3:16.

62. John 3:14-15.

63. 1 Peter 2:24.

64. 2 Cor. 5:21.

65. Eph. 5:25-27.

66. Eph. 1:4.

67. Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:22.

68. Rom. 5:5.

69. Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; John 14:20.

70. Eph. 2:6; Heb. 9:24; 10:12-13.

71. Col. 3:3-4,9-10; Rom. 6:6,11; Gal. 2:20; 6:14.

72. John 14:20; Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 4:10.

73. 1 John 2:6.

74. 2 Cor. 3:3.

75. 2 Cor. 12:9.

76. 1 Thess. 1:10; Titus 2:12-13; Luke 12:35-37.

77. John 10:28.

78. 1 Cor. 1:7-9.

79. Rom. 5:1-2; Gal. 3:24-26; 3:11,14; Rom. 4:16; Eph. 2:8; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 11:4; Acts 13:39; Gal. 3:6,9; Rom. 4:24-25, and many others.

80. Phil. 2:8; John 17:4; Heb. 7:27; 9:25-28; 10:12,18.

81. 1 Cor. 1:30.

82. 2 Cor. 5:21.

83. Eph. 1:6.

84. Rom. 5:19.

85. Jude 1; Heb. 10:10; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 6:11; John 17:17,19; 1 Peter 1:22; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1.

86. Heb. 12:14; 2 Peter 3:14.

87. Eph. 4:13,15; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:2-3; Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12; 5:23.

88. Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12,16,36; 9:18; Eph. 4:5; 1 Cor. 1:17; 1 Peter 3:21; Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12; Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-23; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; 10:3-4.

89. Eph. 4:6-13; Acts 2:33; 1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:6; 1 Peter 4:10-11; Matt. 25:14; Luke 19:13.

90. John 3:16,27; 1 Cor. 2:12; 4:7; Eph. 2:7-10; Titus 2:11.

91. John 15:5; Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Thess. 5:17; Rom. 12:12; Luke 18:1; 2 Peter 1:5-10, and many others. John 8:12; 10:4; 12:26; 17:10; 2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 14:7-8; 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17; 1 John 2:6; 1 Peter 2:2.

92. Matt. 4:4,7,10; Luke 24:25-27,44-46; John 5:39; 10:35; Matt. 5:17-18; John 20:9; Matt. 1:23, and a multitude of passages. Matt. 26:54; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Gal. 3:8; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 15:2-3; 2:13; 14:36-37; Rom. 16:26, where it is not “the scriptures of the prophets,” that is, at any rate scriptures, but New Testament, not Old; 2 Peter 3:16.

93. Psa. 19:7; Heb. 4:12-13; Luke 24:45; 1 Cor. 2:10; 1 John 2:20,27; John 6:45; 1 Cor. 2:12-14.

94. 1 Tim. 6:16.

95. Luke 20:36.

96. Luke 12:4-5; Matt. 10:28; Luke 16:23; 20:38.

97. John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15.

98. Heb. 12:15-17; 1 Tim. 3:15; Titus 3:10-11; 1 Cor. 5:7,13.

Chapter 218

A Worldly Sanctuary: Part 1

We are often in danger of darkening the truth of God, by attaching to the words of Scripture the technical meaning which they may have in the theology of our own days. The words “carnal,” “flesh,” “world,” and “worldly,” are known to us as expressive of that which is corrupt in itself, and which is disowned of God. But if we do not see that God has had long patience both with the flesh and the world, dealing with both in a way of probation previously to His finally giving them up, we shall greatly fall short in apprehending the truth of God. And not only so, but we shall also fail to perceive that every effort which man is now making is but the repetition of that which has been previously attempted under far more favorable circumstances, and which has issued in lamentable failure. “Is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labor in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?”

Let us then remember that the time was when God said to the children of Israel, “Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” This was a “worldly sanctuary” —a sanctuary suited for God's dwelling-place in the world, and suitable also for the worship of a people of the world. God had constituted Israel to be His worldly people. He had fenced them off from the nations round about them by statutes, and judgments, and ordinances; and He had prescribed likewise “ordinances of divine service,” adapted to their sanctuary and to their standing. All here was consistent—all was worldly. Worldly worship, therefore, was then a holy thing in itself, for God had then appointed it. And it would be so now also, if God had a worldly people and a worldly sanctuary; but seeing He now has neither the one nor the other, the attempt to approach God even by ordinances of divine service which He Himself originally prescribed is most sinful. “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that offereth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called none did answer, when I spake none did hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.” That is a solemn word. The very act—which was once a religious act, acceptable to God as the killing an ox for a sin-offering or a burnt-offering—is, when God delights not in it, but man chooses to do it, of mortal guilt; it is as murder before God! The incense which God Himself so minutely directed to be compounded, and without which Aaron himself could not appear before the Lord, lest he die—for one to burn incense is as if he blessed an idol!

Now if such was God's estimate of His own ordinances of worldly worship, when those to whom they were given used them corruptly and willfully, what must be the iniquity of introducing an order of worship which God has distinctly set aside? But has not this been done in the history of the church? and is it not with renewed zeal being attempted in our own day? Forms and rituals of worship suited only to a worldly sanctuary and a worldly people are now sanctioned and established on every hand. Surely this is most fearful sin. The prophet of old was commissioned to rebuke Israel for their corruption and abuse of the worldly sanctuary and its worldly ordinances; but the apostle rebukes the saints of God when tending to turn back to worldly elements. God was

dishonored of old by any neglect of the worldly sanctuary; He is dishonored now by any attempt to copy or re-establish it. This enables us to determine the character of things now done by the professing church—such things, for example, as an altar on earth, repeated sacrifice, the burning of incense, the consecrating of building and of ground, and of persons also, by outward ceremonial. Such like rites and ceremonies were so early borrowed from the Jewish worldly ritual, and transferred into the Christian church, as to have become almost universal shortly after the apostles' days. But where is their warrant in the New Testament? nay, how can men read therein and not see the introduction of such things prophesied of and solemnly warned against? How searching then is such a word as this— “I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them, because when I spake they did not hear!” How needful is that recall to the only source of authority found in the word. “He that hath an ear let him hear” — “He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.” This marks at once the place from whence our wisdom and guidance must be sought—not in antiquity, or in the examples of Judaized churches, but in the unquestioned teaching of the Holy Spirit Himself to the churches. This leads us away from all whose wisdom or authority can for a moment be questioned; it places the word of God itself before the conscience of every saint. Errors, however ancient, or venerable, or attractive, are thus detected, and the child of faith is forbidden to countenance them. This makes the path of faith at all times sure, though oftentimes very difficult. For nothing can be more sure than the steps of one guided by the Spirit of God and the word of God, and yet nothing more difficult than to have to walk in separation from all that exists around. It is indeed difficult to have to wind one's way through things so perplexing and so different as the religious systems of our own day. We have to avoid on the one hand systems formed in imitation of things past, and on the other systems more characterized by anticipations of things future. We have to allow that such things were once given by God, and that they will yet again be introduced by Him, while invariably contending that they are positively opposed to His present working by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

There was a worldly sanctuary; there is yet, in the coming dispensation, to be a worldly sanctuary; but now there is none. Existing systems are variously compounded of things proper to these three distinct periods. Some have drawn most from the past, some from the future, some, it may be, most from the present; but all involve sad confusion in the things of God. How many, who may in some measure have been emancipated from the ordinances of the ancient worldly sanctuary of the past dispensation, do not allow that there is a worldly sanctuary yet to come, and have consequently chosen and instituted that in which God delights not, as much as others who are professedly imitating the ancient ordinances! Thus while denouncing worldly elements they really have invested themselves with that which can only properly belong to the worldly part of the dispensation to come. Thus they are involved in the sin of mingling things heavenly and things earthly. And is not all this a work of the flesh? Is it not an admission of worldly principles into the church of God? Do we not see this in the fond desire for official distinction, dedicated buildings, permanent institutions and ordinances, and attempts to attract worldly repute, so common to the systems around? For all this is not confined to the church of Rome, or to the Protestant Establishments of Europe, but, with scarcely less prominence, characterizes the systems of Dissenters also. And surely all these things, under whatever form seen, must be alike offensive to God. We may go back to some ancient institutions of God, or forward to something He intends yet to introduce, or we may assert our own right to worship according to a pattern of our own devising; but in each and all these cases we subject ourselves to that word, “When I spake, they did not

hear."

It is important therefore to show that there yet will be a worldly sanctuary and worldly worship. This is very largely revealed in the prophets. Their subject of hope is the restored nation, restored polity, and restored worship of Israel; but all, when so restored, under and in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the Christian church has in a. great measure applied these predictions to itself; and hence we have the thought of Christian nations, instead of the holy nation soon to be gathered from out of all nations. Hence too the thought of the union of the church and the state—a thought to be most blessedly fulfilled when Christ as King and Priest shall sit upon His throne. Hence too the antedating of the day when the kings of the earth are to bring their glory and honor to the golden city. Hence the constant invitations which are given to the world to contribute its aid and patronage to the work of the church. All this has secularized Christianity, and given a worldly character to its position and its worship.

In the prophet Isaiah we read, "Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." That would have a house on earth, a worldly sanctuary; but it should be open to all, it should not be confined to Israel. The Israel of that future day would have a standing higher than that which belonged to them as the natural seed of Abraham; and in that standing others would be associated with them, even those who were naturally sons of the stranger. Joined to the Lord, these should be brought to His holy mountain, and made joyful in His house of prayer. The Lord Jesus, the Master of the heavenly house now, and in due time the Builder also of the earthly house and worldly sanctuary, adverts to this scripture in the sequel of His ministry. Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, "Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations?" (Mark 11:17.) It never was this in its first standing. But when it is true of another building, then many nations will come and say, "Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Here we have most clearly a worldly sanctuary, a metropolitan temple on the earth, the fountain of legislation and instruction for all who fear the Lord. Christians may perhaps think that the establishment in the present day of a cathedral on Mount Zion would be an approximation towards the fulfillment of this prophecy. But if that were done, the word would still be, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me, and where is the place of My rest? For all these things hath Mine hand made, and all these things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word."

Ezekiel in his vision witnessed the departure of the glory of the Lord, first from the house and then from the earth (chaps. 10, 11.); but in the forty-third chapter he says, "And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.....and behold the glory of the Lord filled the house.....and He said unto me, Son of man, the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever, and My holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile." Here again we read of that worldly sanctuary yet to be set up.

But not to multiply quotations, let us only revert to two more, both of which lead us onward from the time of the rebuilding of the temple of Zerubbabel. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with My glory, saith the Lord of hosts.....The glory of this house shall be greater, the latter than the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.” Here we must note that this worldly sanctuary is set up after the heavens and the earth have been shaken, which, according to the testimony of the apostle in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, has not yet taken place.

Again, we read in the prophet Zechariah (chap. vi. 12), “Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the Man Whose name is the BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and sit and rule upon his throne; and He shall be a Priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”

Now all these testimonies, and they might be greatly multiplied, tell us of a worldly sanctuary yet to be set up; but not after the old order. There God will be known as the God of peace, even though there divine glory will be; for there Jesus will sit as a Priest upon His throne. Ordinances of divine service will be there, and ministering priests, and a worshipping multitude. One of those ordinances is mentioned in the last prophet referred to. “All the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year, to worship the King the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”

Chapter 219

A Worldly Sanctuary: Part 2

(Concluded from page 63.)

The conclusion therefore from these scriptures is that there was a worldly sanctuary suited to a worshipping people in the flesh on the earth, and that there is yet to be a worldly sanctuary in connection with the New covenant, suitable for the true circumcision, the true spiritual seed, on the earth (Isa. 57). But there is no such sanctuary now. Now there is the heavenly sanctuary only. And this is the contrast so carefully drawn by the Holy Spirit in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The first tabernacle in connection with the worldly sanctuary had its place for a while. During its continuance the way into the holiest of all was not yet laid open, nor could there be the purging of the conscience. Now, the contrast to this first tabernacle is not a second, set up like that on the earth, and in which the worshippers are to be kept at a distance from the holiest, but one set up by God Himself in heaven, into which those only can enter who are cleansed by the blood of Jesus, and anointed with the Holy Spirit; but into which all such do now by faith enter as alike accepted and equally priests. The first tabernacle is therefore in this chapter looked at in contrast with “the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building,” within which the church now worships. Such a sanctuary as this heavenly sanctuary alone befits the “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.” Man, as man, can recognize the propriety of splendid buildings for the worship of God, and he has ever acted accordingly.

But the spiritual house has nothing tangible in it. “Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched.” It is not adapted to the world, nor does it present attractions to the flesh. To one who only judged by appearances there might be some ground for the slander that Christians were Atheists, for there was no visible or imposing attraction in their worship. Their worship was in the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands. They did not attempt in their places of assembly to vie with the imposing architecture either of the temple at Jerusalem, or of the heathen temples around them. They had not heard then of “Christian ecclesiastical architecture;” nor was the church then the patron of the arts. Their temple was not of this creation.

And the ministry in the heavenly sanctuary corresponds with all this. It is complete and perfect, because performed by One Who is divine, One Who is beyond the range of this world's cognizance. Christ is entered once into the holiest, having obtained eternal redemption. The eye of man could scan the beautiful proportions of an earthly sanctuary, and mark the service of an earthly priesthood; but faith alone can enter into the heavenly sanctuary, or delight in its glories. No one of its beauties or glories is displayed to the senses; it is the soul alone which has learned the preciousness of Jesus which is now able to say, “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts.” The Lamb is the light and glory of it. If He be not the object of faith, no wonder that men should again make the sanctuary worldly.

But even when God had His worldly sanctuary here, how little of its beauty was displayed to the ordinary worshipper! He saw not the golden sanctuary, nor the cherubim and vessels of gold—these things were most carefully hidden from his sight. The priests were charged to cover up the vessels of ministry, even from the sight of the Levites, who were to carry them (Num. 4:15, 20). The eyes of the priests alone were to rest on these holy things. Now it is the anti-types of these veiled and precious types with which we have to do. All believers are now priests unto God, and hence all now is open to faith; but open to faith alone. What eye hath not seen, God hath revealed to us by His Spirit. The Holy Ghost is specially come down from heaven in testimony of what He knoweth to be there. He could not witness of a heavenly temple and a heavenly priesthood, until the Builder and Sustainer of the temple and the perpetual Priest was in heaven.

All attempts to establish a worldly sanctuary now are therefore in direct opposition to the present testimony of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost by His coming was the conviction of the world's sin in having rejected Jesus, because testifying that God had exalted Him; but that blessed Spirit is also, by His very presence in the church, the conviction of the sin of every attempt to set up a worldly sanctuary. He has to testify only of a High Priest now ministering in the heavens, “Jesus, the Son of God, who is passed through the heavens;” and consequently He can only lead the soul to Him He glorifies. All who worship “in Spirit” must therefore worship in the heavenly sanctuary; for there alone does the Spirit lead.

But man, as man, knows not the Spirit of God; the world cannot receive Him (John 14). It is no part to His ministry to guide the flesh into the presence of God, or to teach it to worship. His very presence here is God's most emphatic and solemn testimony of the entire ruin of man, and of his utter incompetency for any good thing. The new birth must therefore precede worship. The only true worshippers now are those who are separated unto God through “sanctification of the Spirit.” These are now “the holy priesthood,” “the royal nation.” And it is well for the saints themselves to bear constantly in mind this elementary truth. For it will enable them to test all that assumes to be worship. We may have the senses gratified, the imagination exercised, sentiment and feeling kindled; and we may mistake such things for worship; but they are fleshly things, and when found in saints they sadly grieve the Spirit of God. These are things against which the saints have to watch, and which they have to mortify; but these are the things which must be fostered and gratified by the willful introduction of a worldly sanctuary. What more fearful then than to confound such a work with the present work of the Spirit of God? Is not this to confound darkness with light—flesh with Spirit? The whole order of a worldly sanctuary must hinder the present testimony of the Spirit of God. Now to do despite to the Spirit of grace—to insult the Spirit of God—is indeed fearful sin. But what has the Spirit of grace to do in the worldly sanctuary? There the great points are the service of the ministering priest, and the duties of the suppliant, distant, people. Grace is excluded in the whole order. Grace establishes the heart; but the worldly sanctuary leads it back again to meats. Any return now, therefore, to a worldly sanctuary must be as insulting to the Holy Spirit as it is contradictory of the finished work of Jesus.

But consider a moment longer, how truly the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of grace. What is His blessed witness to us? Is it not to grace accomplished in glory in heaven? Jesus by His own blood has entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. This it is which the Holy Ghost has revealed to Christ is there—and there “having obtained eternal redemption;” and it is “now to appear in the presence of God for us.” What need we more than this? Can we not by faith

see there the witness of our own present acceptance and the pledge of our own glory? There then is the scene of our worship—there is our sanctuary—our only sanctuary. And it is into this scene of accomplished and abundant blessedness that the Spirit of God has come to lead our souls. “Set your affection on things above” is His unceasing exhortation to us. May our hearts know more of the peace and glory of that heavenly sanctuary!

And what should be the characteristic of the worship of the heavenly sanctuary? Surely praise!—praise for accomplished redemption. And this will not be wanting, if our souls realize our heavenly portion. Who, indeed, can withhold their tribute of praise, if they really worship in that sanctuary? Fullness of joy, and pleasures forever, are at God's right hand; and every heart, led of the Spirit there, declares, “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever,” of eternal redemption, found in the perfect work of Jesus—that work which He Himself ever presents on our behalf in heaven. “Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.”

The worldly sanctuary knew nothing properly of praise. There was no ministry of song prescribed by Moses. He could sing with the children of Israel the song of redemption after passing the Red Sea (Ex. 15); but it was grace which had brought them over. They sang the triumph of grace. The worldly sanctuary had not then been ordered. In it there was nothing ever accomplished, and therefore no ground-work of praise. There was the constant repetition of the same services; the worshipper's conscience was unpurged; and hence he could never raise the voice of praise and thanksgiving. We speak of the tabernacle in the wilderness. But few even of the strains of the sweet Psalmist of Israel were adapted to the service of the ancient temple. That temple was a worldly sanctuary, and its blessings earthly; but the ministry of song went beyond all that economy, anticipating the full and accomplished blessing. Faith could sing then, only because reaching beyond the then present sanctuary; but faith sings now, because in its present sanctuary it finds the themes of everlasting praises. Grace and glory, deliverance and victory, the wondrous salvation of God Himself, are there the subjects of unceasing praise; for their accomplishment is witnessed by the presence there in glory of our Forerunner Himself.

Can that heart be turned to praise—which is taught its need of a daily absolution from the lips of another? Can such a soul sing in the Spirit and with the understanding psalms and hymns and spiritual songs? Can an unpurged conscience praise? Such things are impossible. For is not the very act of worship regarded as a duty required by God, and so rendered under a sense of law, instead of a blessed privilege arising from the perception and enjoyment of mercy from everlasting to everlasting? The apostle teaches us to give “thanks to Him Who hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1). This shows the true ground of thanksgiving and praise to be what grace has accomplished for us in Christ. But if this is not seen and remembered, worship must become a burden instead of our highest privilege. And do we not see that Christians regard the teaching and preaching, with which God blesses them, far more highly than worship? This is a sure consequence of not remembering the sanctuary in which we worship. Let the soul realize this, and it will instantly perceive what are its grounds of praise, and what the character of its worship. But if a worldly sanctuary is established, or the order of a worldly sanctuary is introduced, our worship must be degraded, and our souls become lean. Such results must ensue if we take for our pattern the worldly sanctuary, instead of by faith, and as led of the Spirit, entering into that which is heavenly. There all that concerns our redemption and our meetness for the light itself has been

already accomplished, and there accordingly, amidst our everlasting blessings, we can join the company who “sing of the mercies of the Lord forever.”

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