BIBLE TREASURY VOLUME 7

by Unknown

A collection of articles and writings from Bible Treasury Volume 7, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

283 Chapters

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Chapter 0

Bible Treasury Volume 7

Chapter 1

Fragmentary Notes on 1 and 2 Timothy

(1 Timothy)

The fact of flesh (i.e., of the flesh being in us) does not make a bad conscience. It requires flesh in action, so as to produce outwardly what is bad to do so.

“Holding faith and a good conscience” —in this we have the doctrine of the epistle.

I may see what is beautiful in creation, and delight in it; but the moment I rest in it, I make it an object, and then sink down into it.

“We know” is a technical expression for Christian knowledge. It is not merely knowing objectively, but rather such and such is made a subject of revelation, and we have got it and know it.

“Using the law lawfully” is convicting sinners by it. The legalist takes the ground that the law proves he cannot take. The law never goes beyond the brazen altar, that is, man's responsibility as man.

The law condemns all that flesh produces, but not flesh itself.

The sabbath—rest—is an integral part of man's relationship with God; God did rest in creation, but not now since man has fallen. The sabbath is annexed to everything (or order) that is set up (with responsible man as man); but in the New Testament, it is always set aside as is man, the child of Adam fallen.

Paul calls himself the chief of sinners; that is, he was a rejecter of the Lord after He was crucified and glorified; the Jew (properly speaking, is characterized as being) a rejecter before He was crucified. Stephen's martyrdom was the closing scene of the dispensation for the Jew. The chief of sinners is an end of self, and we are in the same boat with Paul when we take that place.

The gospel of the glory (of Christ) is the highest point of grace as it reveals the glory to the person who is trying to destroy it: in preaching, however, you must go back to where the want is in the soul.

“Make shipwreck of faith” is running into heresy, backsliding, giving up a good conscience.

Not only man has fallen—there are fallen angels, and the heavens are defiled; all things had and are to be reconciled. Those that are reconciled do need a mediator for intercession. A mediator comes in with a broken relationship, an advocate with a retained one.

In Ephesians we are called on to be imitators of God; in Colossians, like Christ; in Philippians, to walk as a saint, as personified in Paul.

An unmarried man might be a ruler, but he could not be an elder. A ruler is a gift, an elder an office; gifts are for the body; office is local. We have an example in Timothy of a young man who ruled elders. A ruler is a person who gets an ascendency over others morally and keeps their wills from working by the power of the word in the Spirit.

Christianity takes up creation as God made it and sanctions it, and brings in another power, viz., spiritual power.

The snare of the devil which is a bad conscience, brings in the same condemnation; the person is charged with the same thing Satan is charged with, viz., pride. See Ezek. 28

The precious stones are on the king of Tire in creation (worldly glory); on Aaron in grace (the high priest); in the new Jerusalem, in glory.

The Holy Ghost dwells in the individual believer, and in the whole Church, only.

“Justified in the Spirit” —that is, the power of the Spirit characterizes the justification. “Seen of angels;” it is only by Christ angels have seen God. “Believed on in the world,” that is, announced and received there by faith.

The Reformation reformed the existing body as it then was: we go back to the beginning.

The everlasting covenant has a different character from the new covenant. There are many covenants in scripture, but the old and new are distinct, and with Israel only.

Every prophetic word comes from relationship broken; for us now, as Christians and in Christ, everything is restored. (1 Tim. 4:5.) Hence the creature is sanctified by the word to me, prayer goes up from me in response.

There are two characters of forgiveness of sins—the one as in Romans, justification, in which man has no power, the other, the sins or failure of a justified person. The Church can forgive these. It is administrative forgiveness.

Dependence is kept up in scripture without ever questioning acceptance.

Salvation is by grace; reward is for labor.

God is the only one that has immortality in Himself. When we speak of mortality, it only applies to the body. “The soul that sinneth it shall die” means that each one shall die for his own sin; in other words, it is individual responsibility.

(2 Timothy.)

When the power of evil comes in, then it is just the time to expect courage. These are truths for the times. There are truths for eternity, which are more blessed. Through grace we now have Paul's testimony, which bad been lost, brought out again.

In the early Church they used to pray for the saints, not to them. In the fourth century Christ was the only one they did not pray for.

“Purge from.” It is not exactly discipline here, but to separate myself from. There is the Lord's certainty, and man's responsibility, acting on which I then get ecclesiastical apprehension.

A thing may not be wrong for a person ecclesiastically, if he has no conscience about it; at the same time the Church cannot be ruled by an individual person's conscience.

The word “receiving” (into communion) should not be admitted at all. Properly speaking, we are all in. One has now to ascertain whether people are real—who calls on the Lord out of a pure heart.

“The last days” are more definite and distinct than the “latter times” — “perilous,” because of the form of godliness.

It is said, You must believe in the Church because it is holy, and you must believe it is holy by faith!

We are always deficient in strength in service if we do not recognize that we have to do with Satanic power, as in Jannes and Jambres.

If I do not believe the word till it is sanctioned by some one else, I do not believe it at all; it is the sanction I believe.

No one speaks of the Church but Paul, nor of Christ's coming for the Church but he.

When we meet together, we recognize the presence of Christ, not the habitation of God.

External testimony proves the folly of other men, but does nothing for faith. All arguments only remove the rubbish, they do not give faith. By removing rubbish from a plant, you do not make it grow, but you give it liberty to do so.

A gospel rejecter is under the responsibility of rejecting love. There is rather a want of will to come than a want of power: “Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.”

We find that angels are the power of providence, Israel the power of government, and the apostles the power of grace in the Spirit.

Chapter 2

Thoughts on 1 Corinthians 2

We get two things very distinctly here—the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world to our glory (and that in the person of the Christ), which the princes of this world did not know, or they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; and then we are told that, as “no man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him, so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God;” therefore the world is in total ignorance of the things of God.

They may be very learned and clever; but they do not know them. Nay, it is rather their boast that man can know nothing but what he sees, together with a few conclusions which he may thence draw. And it is perfectly true too, and therefore of the most fashionable infidelities of the day at the same time. Of all that is outside sense they are utterly ignorant; and so they must be. With all the learning and talent that is in man, if he meddles with things beyond these, he puzzles himself hopelessly. He only comes either to say, there is no God; or if there is, he does not know what that God is, just as Pilate asked, “What is truth?” He will make quantities of speculations and very clever ones, but can go no farther. Yet he has a conscience. There is a sense of being responsible to some one. There is a knowledge of the judgment of God (kept out greatly, it is true, by man's will); but God took care when man fell, that he should carry a certain knowledge of good and evil with him after eating of the forbidden fruit. So he does carry a conscience, hardened perhaps, but there it is to get hardened and perverted. You may see it in the case of the poor woman taken in adultery, all her accusers went out one by one convicted by their own consciences.

So it has always been, whether God gives man a law, or man is lawless, still there it is—a knowledge of good and evil. And so there is an instinctive sense that there is a judgment, but utter ignorance of what God is, except that He takes account of what man does. There is some feeling, too, at times, that He is good and must be good, but there is no knowledge of any Spirit of God or of His intentions. Of course, beyond this, there is Christianity in its general truths floating about us.

But it is wonderfully expressed here; the wisdom of God in a mystery, hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew. There cannot be a more wonderful expression than that, for Christ is the wisdom of God as well as the power of God, and Christ they crucified. The first thing we learn is, that these counsels of God were before the world. I am now speaking not of election, but of the plans and thoughts of God before the world was. There is this distinct contrast in this verse, thoughts and counsels of God ordained for our glory, before the world in which we are now living with all its responsibilities. Now, these counsels, which were before the world, had been brought out consequent upon the death of Christ.

I would insist for a moment on this, that there is a world which has its own thoughts and objects; but that world crucified the Lord of glory. All that had the wisdom of this world and its power were found in opposition to Christ. The governor Pilate, the chief priests and elders of the people, Jew and Gentile, the secular power and the religious power, refused the Lord of glory. And also there is a world in which we are living which has through the cleverness and skill of man under Satan

formed round man a wonderful scene so far as man's thoughts go, pleasures, sciences, and the development of the things given in creation; developing again the talents of man amid these things; wonderful combinations exhibited; great skill in turning things to man's use; beautiful music with rich harmonies: all constituting just Cain's history again. He had built his city, he had his artificers in brass and iron; and so have we now: he had harp and organ, and so have we now; pleasing himself without thinking of God, shutting God out and making the world pleasant to the natural feelings apart from Him, then and now alike.

Now Christians are apt to go along with this world and all these things because they have natural powers to appreciate them. There is nothing wrong in these things of the world themselves; it is in the use man makes of them, there is the right and the wrong. There is no conscience in these things, no spiritual affections in them, no moral good in them (all God's creatures, of course). Nor are the things evil. Why, in heaven we read of the harpers harping with their harps. It is the use that is made of these things that is wrong; and Christians are very apt to slip into the world's way, and not see the value of what they do, from mere natural delight in things here. It is a world that is forming pleasures for itself out of what God did create; but it does not care for God, for it rejected Him. It did not know the Lord of glory, for it is a Cain-world, with plenty of music of its own, of course; and Christians take it up as something good that they can share; whereas it was nothing but Cain's world to begin with and Cain's world to go on with.

But mark there is another thing altogether—a reality that was before the world and which is known only by faith. It is the more solemn because responsibility began of course only with this world. The first Adam was the responsible man, and he failed, and all are sinners since. This is what came in, it was not the counsel of God (in a sense a counsel known to Him of course), it was not a definite design. My responsibility is not God's counsels, and that came in after these counsels were formed. And this is the way of God's dealings and the way He always deals—He has a thought which He will bring about; but in the meanwhile things are trusted to man, just as in the case of Adam. God had the intention of having the Second Man and all His glory set up in Him. This is what God had in His mind. It was set up in Christ before the world existed. After that God set up the first man Adam; and he—Adam—is the man of responsibility—not the man of God's counsels.

And you find the two great principles in the garden at the beginning in the two trees there—grace that gave life, and responsibility to obey or disobey. The law took up the same two, but put the responsibility first—this do and live. Again a breach. Man made a golden calf at once. Then when God set up the Church, all went to sleep, wise as well as foolish, or said, “My Lord delayeth his coming.” Then God brings out His counsel ordained before the world—that He will bring man into His own glory as well as sinless into His presence in Christ. He forms the Church to reign with Christ in that glory. And nothing of this will He fail to accomplish in result; but first He puts man in responsibility, and man has to learn his total failure in himself by powerful conviction by the Spirit of God and the word of God, so as to be cast upon grace, and find glory.

Now it is the place we get into thus that I desire to touch upon. You may find it in the scheme of God, but yet a soul must go through the place of responsibility for himself. He must own failure and the way in which he has failed—that in his flesh there is no good thing at all—and then, entirely cast on grace, find Christ. Now Christ as a Savior meets this position and need, by putting Himself

in charge of the glory of God as to the whole responsibility. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, and has met responsibility completely, perfectly, as regards our sins and the glory of God both— “bearing our sins in his own body on the tree;” and again, “now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” He has completed the work, sins are gone, and God's glory is perfectly accomplished, so that all is finished, and the foundation laid, not on the responsibility of the first man, but on the accomplishment of God's work by the Second Man, so that the whole question is ended. And also Christ is the other thing. He is the life; He is both the trees; and the ruin that came in is met by Christ on the cross, and, infinitely more, by Christ becoming our life. It is all met now before the things are accomplished in glory, while, as regards the peace of the soul and the redemption of the sinner and his meetness to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, it is now a settled thing—perfectly settled, for he now has life not of the first Adam, but of the Second. In his mortal body it is now the life of Jesus that is to be manifested; it is Christ who is our life. This shows that the first thing is judged totally; if any man be in Christ not only is he a new creature but all is new.

And you find this borne out through scripture. In Ephesians it is not a man living in sins but one dead in sins, so that he is not there meeting sinners in their condition as such, but regards them as created in Christ Jesus, God's workmanship. Consequently there we have the whole full result—ourselves set in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus brought out. In Romans we have the condition of the sinner most completely met. And so the whole thing is settled. There is a world that Satan has formed round the first man, and the question is whether a believer is to go on with it. We have to go through it with this testing us—shall the glory revealed by the Spirit of God, or the world Satan has formed round us in nature, possess our hearts? I am not talking now of sins; but it is a solemn question whether this world possesses our hearts or not. The character of things now is not gross immorality; but is the first man to be exalted, or the Second? Of course there is immorality; but you find persons boasting of a general improvement of society, and with some ground it may be, but it is all beside the point. Externally it may be something less gross than in times that have passed, but which man is exalted in your hearts—the first, or the Second?

Now, the thought and counsels of God, in Christ first as center, are ordained for our glory that we may be thoroughly drawn out from the world in spirit altogether. He has called us in Christ and by Christ, and has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. And are our hearts there? Bodies not of course yet, but our hearts. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God, and we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.” “If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” —suffer truly as regards this world, though at the same time we find it too is all ours while it does not yet appear what we shall be. Then how far are our hearts set upon that that we are going to be? It is wonderful how the scripture insists upon this with Christians. See in Colossians how it is declared we are dead and our life hid with Christ in God: you get the same share with Him. God has associated the Christian with Christ. Now as to your hearts, beloved friends, are they associated with Christ or does the world and its fashion get hold of you? It touches us all: we all have to go through it; and it is the purpose of God that you should walk by faith and not by sight. If a man saw God, the greatest sinner in the town would not go and sin in His face. Like children in a school, it is when the master's back is turned that they get into mischief.

But mark again this—God begins by a perfect redemption: you must not have the slightest cloud upon that part of the truth. Trial of you and your responsibility have nothing to do with judgment and acceptance: on this there is no question. “There is none righteous, no, not one;” and if God enter into judgment with us, no flesh shall be saved, no, not one of you: if you have anything to do with judgment, you have certainly to do with condemnation and nothing short of it. And yet we shall all appear (be manifested) at the judgment seat of Christ—that remains quite true.

Now God, anticipating all this, brings down the full testimony that you are total sinners, and that in your flesh dwelleth no good thing. God will show you it all, that He may bring it home to you, by your fears even, if Christ is coming; for you would not feel easy if He came. But God will bring you to this point if you are to get peace. He has done with flesh, He has condemned it; and so you can have nothing to do with looking for good in it, because He has condemned it. The body is dead because of sin. If it is life, it is alive in sin. It is not a question of amiable qualities—you find them in a dog; but it is a question whether you like to do your own will; for if you do, you are in rebellion against God. But God has perfectly redeemed the believer out of all this.

He has gone through the whole scene of man's responsibility, without law, and under law, and lastly sent His Son who was only rejected and then declared “now is the judgment of this world.” And there is your judgment; you are of that world and belong to it, and you have been judged in its judgment on the cross. Stephen charges the Jews that they had received the law by the disposition of angels and had not kept it—which of the prophets have not your fathers rejected? as your fathers resisted the Holy Ghost, so do ye; killed the prophets; rejected God's Son; resisted the Holy Ghost, and this of God's people on the earth. Well, it is all judged. And if through grace we have been individually brought to a consciousness of it in our own souls, then we are cast exclusively upon Christ, and the question is not whether you have failed in your responsibility, but whether God has failed in His work. This is all the question; and herein too is the truth of the gospel. What ruined the Church (that is, as a thing in man's hand, not, of course, God's work) was, that the simple completeness of redemption was lost; the fact, I mean, that man does not stand before God in his condition as a child of Adam at all, but in Christ, after Christ had done God's work for him. And each one must learn this in his own consciousness for himself. The things God must have judged man for Christ has borne. And yet more: He becomes our life. Consequent on this work which He has done, we can say we have died with Him; and He is our life. The tree is ended, as well as the fruits. The whole tree is gone for faith; and therefore one can say, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” This is “I” now. I do not admit the flesh to be “I” any more. He is my life; “Christ liveth in me.” And this is what deliverance is—not forgiveness only, but deliverance. Deliverance is that we are not in the flesh at all, not in that which has man's responsibility before God. There is therefore no question of meetness. Christ is meet for heaven; and whoever is in Christ is also meet for heaven. You must add to the value of Christ's work before you can add to the title of your meetness for heaven.

Then comes another thing. The moment the Christian is seen in Christ—not merely that He has borne my sins, but in Christ—there is one who can be sealed with the Spirit of God. The moment he is washed by the blood of Christ, the Holy Ghost can dwell in him. We must never confound the quickening of a soul with the presence of the Spirit which seals Christ's work. The Holy Ghost quickens my soul, and brings me under the blood of sprinkling whereby I am as white as snow: after this the Holy Ghost comes to dwell in me as thus washed clean. God sees me perfectly

cleansed and the Holy Ghost is the seal of it and of me—all in virtue of the efficacy of Christ's blood.

The presence of the Holy Ghost is a consequence of redemption. When Christ had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and “being by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear;” and further, “because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts whereby we cry, Abba Father,” and then you see at once this gives me a capacity to enjoy whatever God opens up to me. But Paul says, “we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery;” but even a crucified Christ was a stumblingblock to a Jew and foolishness to a Greek. Ah! you may be a Jew or a philosopher; but you are a sinner; and this is all God knows about you. You must all meet God at the cross of Christ.

Having brought this in, the apostle goes on to say “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, or they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” Now here we find Christ in the glory—a man there; and, connected with Him, God can bring out all these counsels. Christ, who is the center of it all, is actually a man in heavenly glory; and further, the Holy Ghost can come down and unfold all this. Man is in the glory of God, as Stephen shows at the very turning-point of man's depravity in resisting the Holy Ghost. Then the mystery comes out. The Holy Ghost having been sent down, associates us with it on the footing of a place in Christ (the old man is set aside— “ye are dead"). We stand in a righteousness in Christ which is God's righteousness, when man had none. Now the Holy Ghost can bring in all the heavenly glory, and this is what He is doing for the Christian. We have the life and the righteousness.

Let me ask you who profess the Lord, are you so distinct in judging all that belongs to nature that this is true to you? There is plenty to learn, I know. We have to be humbled and proved to do us good at the latter end; but why? Because we have been redeemed out of Egypt. You do not find this in connection with Israel until they were redeemed from Egypt. Has your heart taken the place of being delivered from this present evil world? Has your heart taken its place where the Second Adam has set you?

Oh, but you say, I do not know the things that are there. Why do you not? Have they not been revealed? People quote this passage, “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,” to show how great these things of God are—they have not entered into the heart of man. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: such is the scripture—just the opposite of the common quotation. You see God means us to know them; we may have been bad scholars at the lesson—very. But He has given us a title—to what? Simply to be saved? Is that all? Is it nothing to say, I am come to God the judge of all—I can look down upon things that are for judgment—the reproach of Egypt is done away—I am in Christ, and see the glory of the Son of God and Son of man—the Son who earned God's love? Yes, earned it! for He says, “therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life.” Is it nothing to see the Lamb slain?

And where is to be your place? You are going to be like Himself. Did you never think of this? As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” “And we have received the Spirit, not which is of the world but which is of God to know the things which are

freely given unto us of God." It is not the redemption, though we must know that truly and get clear as to it; it is more. Again, I ask, Have your souls never tasted what it is to be where there is nothing but holiness—not a jar with what God is? What a delight! And all around not one jar, not a thing that does not answer to the glory of God as God and to the love of God as love!—Nothing. Christ is the center of it, and we, in a certain sense, so too, as in Him. Are our souls living there? Well, you will get a white stone; but you say, Am I to have God's approving delight upon me? Yes. And the name. Ah, this will be a secret between you and Christ. Is there nothing in that? Is there nothing in His approbation so put upon us? Does it not come into your heart as that which is unspeakable joy? Again, "the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." But if I see the Lamb in the midst of the throne, Ah! I say, now I am indeed at home, that is the sight that dazzles every other, and that is the sight which is for one; the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple there. We shall sit upon a throne with Christ—conferred glory surely but none the less real. Will this be nothing? There will not be a thing in Christ's heart that is not satisfied towards us, and is this nothing to us? And is it nothing to us to see the Man that has suffered for us glorified? Now the Spirit of God has taken these things and revealed them unto us that we may live in these things.

And mark the order at the end of the chapter "what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit 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 fully given to us of God, which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" —lit up in Paul's heart, like a candle in a lantern. And now he is communicating them by inspiration; he gets them by revelation and communicates them by inspiration. Oh, what a thing it is when I hear men babbling about the scriptures and talking of what is right and wrong in them forsooth! Here I have such things as these in the revelation given by inspiration, and men must seek to find faults here. How busy measuring spots in the sun and the bumps upon it if they can, when it has been the light of the world ever since it was created! First there was the revelation of the things and then the communication of them by inspiration, but then "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; but he that is spiritual judgeth all things." Now I get the receiving of what is revealed and inspired—three things. First, revelation, and this some would deny altogether; second, communication by the Holy Ghost—some will not deny that the word of God is in it, but that scripture is the word of God. I say Nay, it was the revelation from God to man but it came out from the man as pure as it came in— "we speak not in words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," and as he says again, "we have not corrupted the word of God," we have given it by inspiration as we have received it by revelation. And now I get the third step, which explains the infidelity as to the first— "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God:" that is the truth of the riddle. He is a natural man and does not receive the things of the Spirit of God at all, it is only by the power of the Spirit of God that they are received. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ."

Wonderful! a great deal to learn yet truly, but it has been given to us. We know in part as to details; but still the counsel of God in Christ, who is the wisdom and power of God, has been revealed, and revealed too through the cross in which the natural man has been totally judged, while also,

consequent upon the exaltation of the Second Adam to the right hand of God, it has been given forth to us by the Holy Ghost. Our Lord said after His resurrection, “I go to my God and your God, to my Father and your Father;” that is, if I am going into the glory, I go as your forerunner, for I take you into such relationship. It is ordained for your glory. Beloved, do you believe that, that all these wonderful counsels of God are ordained for your glory? Do you believe?

Wonderful thought of God! He is showing to us the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. Are our hearts touched by it? or is this wretched world which rejected Christ still clinging to us as a briar might as we walk through a field? Has the power of the divine Spirit separated our hearts from it, and set our affections on things that are above, and not on the things on the earth? Weigh this. If Christ has died in love and given us that place where He is, see whether your hearts are living as what He has brought you to, or as what He has brought you out of. The friendship of the world is enmity to God. Our Lord give us to know the unspeakable love that has given us such things. Presumption! Suppose the prodigal son had said “the best robe is too good for me.” Too good! What business had you in the house at all? God has glorified Himself in this wonderful work of grace; and I must take my place according to what He has made it to be, and nothing loth to do it either. And yet our glory is in a certain sense poor, compared with seeing Him glorified. The Lord give you to live, in your life in the flesh, that inward life in connection with Christ which is practically dead to the world and alive to God through Christ, to find the blessedness of His love in these things born in your hearts.

The communications of God are adapted to the position of those who historically received them. This brings us into intelligence of all the counsels of God, for He reveals Himself in His authority, His wisdom, and His sovereignty in these counsels, as He makes Himself known in His nature by the revelation of Himself in Christ.

Chapter 3

Thoughts on 1 Samuel

The first book of Samuel commences with the promise of the king.

Chap. 2:10. The people had walked badly, and God presents Christ when all else failed down here. That which man was not able to accomplish, God perfectly accomplished in Christ, but always going far beyond. In Adam, rule; in Noah, the sword; in Sinai, the law; in Aaron the priesthood (already before Eli). Prophecy does not imply responsibility, because it is a question of the power and of the sovereignty of God in grace; in Israel, royalty; and finally, the Church.

Ver. 18. In a certain sense, Samuel has, as it were, taken the place of the priesthood. The priesthood was the means by which man drew nigh to God; but when the priesthood had failed, God can work in sovereignty, and that is what He is doing here he gives Samuel, or prophecy, by means of which God draws nigh to man in His sovereign grace.

Ver. 35. It is no longer a question for the priesthood to walk before God, but before His anointed one, royalty being introduced. The king forms the link between God and the people, and the priesthood takes the second place.

Ver. 32. God forsakes His own dwelling-place, and in the land which God gave to Israel for their good, the enemies would take possession of it. It is not a question however in this verse of the tabernacle of the congregation; it is the tabernacle, in the general sense, to signify habitation or dwelling-place.

Chap. 3. Having determined to judge the house of Eli, God reveals it by the mouth of Samuel. Sincerity is worth nothing, if there is not also light and faithfulness. Nevertheless there was piety with Eli, for when he learns the death of his sons, this affects him little, but the taking of the ark causes his death.

Chap. 4. Samuel, prophet.

Judgment executed. For the present moment, that which takes the place of the ark in Israel is the Philistines. God takes care Himself of His glory, when His people can no longer take care of it. Yet it was a sad capture for the Philistines. They carry the emblem of power into the very midst of their idolatry. When the ark is taken, in the main, all is over with Israel. All their history from Sinai closes here. That is why the ark was never brought back to the tabernacle, but placed in Sion, and this commences an entirely new order of things. (Read Psa. 78)

Ver. 59. God in great wrath rejects all.

Ver. 65. He awakes in David.

Ver. 67. As to Joseph, who has the double portion of the inheritance according to nature, God refuses him.

Ver. 68. All is now on the ground of election according to grace.

Chap. vi. Good sense in the priests. They sent back the ark, with the thought that the God of the ark was more powerful than the affection of the cows for their calves. God could over-rule nature; otherwise, that which had happened to them was mere chance. When David brought back the ark, he had not the good sense of the priests of the Philistines.

Ver. 19. Much the same happens to the people of God, when they are not faithful. When one has lost God, one laments after Him; then, when He is there, they forsake Him.

Chap. 7. The sovereignty of God in grace acting by prophecy—Samuel, the center of all this system.

Chap. 8. Although God had already interposed in grace several times, they reject Him as king; they will have Him no longer.

Chap. 9. Saul, wretched man! He ignored the man by whom God had done so many things, and God who had wrought them.

Chap. 10. Nevertheless he is anointed. What was the state of Israel at this moment? Very sad. Still there remained the God of Bethel, who had promised to Jacob never to forsake him. If Saul had been honest, he would have said, That is what we want.

Then Saul is recognized by Israel.

The will of God—the seat of the sovereignty and power of God in grace, where the Philistines (the devil) were; and nevertheless a company of prophets (the Spirit acts in power in spite of the Philistines), a small remnant who praised the God of Bethel, so that if there had been ever so little faith, Saul could have known the thoughts of God, and being His anointed to be the leader and deliverer of the people (chap. ix. 16), he might well have driven away the Philistines, who were in the land of God. There are the signs; then, we must listen to the word. Whatever may be the signs that we may have, one must await the direction in order to act. The Philistines are always the enemies in the land; the others are outside; these are in the land of God. The worst enemies of the Church are those who are within.

Ver. 8. Saul remains two years before going down into Gilgal.

Chap. 13. The iniquity penetrates very deep. Although the people had their king, there were no arms in the land.

Saul is put to the test. He causes the trumpet to be sounded, not in order that God should hear in Israel the elect of God, but the Hebrews—a heathen name. He seems not to have had one single thought of God. If the Philistines have any strength, it is also needful that the Hebrews should listen. It was nation against nation—no intelligence, no link with God. Gilgal ought to have recalled something to Saul's mind; but he has neither faith nor intelligence. Saul may here represent some one who desires good; but it is only the flesh. He nevertheless follows the word of God outwardly; but he proves at the same time that he has never depended upon God for one single instant, and that the flesh cannot sustain itself in the path of faith. If he had known the need he had of God, he would have waited, whatever might have come. The faith of Jonathan begins, and the flesh cannot follow. When faith begins, all flesh is routed.

Chap. 14. Jonathan did not look for the honey, but God gave him some to refresh his heart in the midst of the energy of his faith.

Ver. 47. Saul was troubling everything. There is relief and not deliverance; for soon we find the Philistines and Goliath. He did not destroy the enemies, but He plucked Israel out of their hands. God had not yet anointed David, for He does not work until the people have entirely failed.

Chap. 15. Saul is here a second Achan. God has in His heart what Amalek did. He will destroy him. Saul ought to have understood that, but he is not identified with the feelings of God. He avails himself of the power which God gives him to rob God.

Chap. 17. When David was alone, it was a trial; but he was infinitely worse in Saul's court, surrounded by unbelief. After having been in the court, he could again mind the sheep. Self-denial of David. It is needful that after having worked with God, he should still wait on God for the reward. In order for faith to be something, it must go through every difficulty—family difficulties, &c. “Uncircumcised” —man who has not God—Goliath had committed himself by challenging God's army. This was the strength of David.

Ver. 58. Faith has no pretensions; it returns to its own insignificance, because, after all, faith is nothing. Chap. 18. Jonathan recalls to my mind the remnant of Israel, He loves David with all his heart; but he had not followed him. Chap. 23:16-18 tells us what Jonathan was. Abigail represents much more the faith of the Church. In the tribulation of Jesus the remnant does not take part with Him, whereas Abigail follows him everywhere. Although he is rejected, she calls him Lord, whilst Saul is to her only a man. She has intelligence. She judges Nabal, although the judgment was not yet executed. She becomes the wife of David in the desert: thus it is with the Church. When David was with Achish, he was in a sad state—a servant of God, who says he had done evil to the people of God, in order to be well with the world.

They said of David, The Lord is with him. They expected much from him, but nothing came. One must follow for a long time the path of faith.

Ver. 3.4. Here is the intelligence of David: when it is a question of enemies, David is always ready.

Chap. 19:20-22. Saul loses all conscience. The thought that David was with Samuel ought to have stopped him—Samuel by whom he had been anointed. God put all things in his way to stop him; but he was hardened. In prophesying himself, he ought to have understood that the power which caused him to act at this moment, and which rested on David, was greater than himself; but he despises these signs as he had despised the first. The career of David then became very painful, because it was a question of not killing Saul, of doing nothing.

Chap. 21. The sword of Goliath—the power of death. David carried it with him, but certainly did not show it to Achish.

Chap. 22. Here he is in his place. All was there—royalty, prophecy, and priesthood. Saul, after having despised prophecy, turns against the priesthood. Yet David is not discouraged; he will protect Abiathar.

Chap. 23. One of the characteristics in David is always to consult God.

Chap. 24. For the present David was doing nothing. It is difficult to do nothing, when one feels that God is with us. David has much more regard for Saul than Saul had for himself. Excellent spirit!

Chap. 25. Prophecy, properly so called, disappears. Nabal (Israel) is set aside, he who rejected David; and Abigail becomes the wife of the despised one, while he is in the wilderness. It is not properly the Church; but she is on the principle of the Church. Jesus, after all, was taking care of the sheep, although He was not owned. Abigail goes to meet David before the death of Nabal; thus of the Church before the nation is judged. The faith of this woman is very remarkable.

Ver. 26. Abigail, as it were, sentences her husband to death. She sees in Saul a man, and in David the anointed and the servant of Jehovah.

Chap. 26. God again gives to David the opportunity of killing Saul, and that which David says to him this time is much more severe. David never surrenders himself to Saul. He is a hero. He never lets go his object, and his persevering faith is a beautiful thing.

Ver. 10, 11. He has a profound respect for all that belongs to God.

Chap. 27. His faith here fails completely. He seeks the favor of God's enemies in boasting of having done evil to His people.

Chap. 29. Poor David! God permitted all that, to show that in bringing him to the throne, all was grace. He is set aside for a certain time, like Saul.

Chap. 30. David burns through the fire which he himself has kindled. But he always lays hold of God's actings.

Chap. 31. The Philistines are in full possession of all in order to be completely beaten. What grace that God prevented David from going with Achish! If he had put his hand on Saul, he could not have uttered the lamentation which he composed on the subject of his death.

The progress of evil in Saul deserves attention. After disobedience, after jealousy and hatred against David, he despises the prophet in the very circumstances which ought to have reminded him of his authority, then the priesthood, and lastly, he is totally forsaken, and seeks for help in the power of Satan. It is well also to notice that, when he falls, Israel is deprived of everything. David was among the Philistines—Samuel was dead—the priesthood was judged, and even Abiathar was far off. There remained nothing, the state of Israel was complete desolation. Mark well that (David, by his unbelief, having been obliged to hide himself among the Philistines) all depended on God in pure grace. Mark also that, when David leaves Saul, which is the beginning of his typical history in contrast with Saul, he takes with him the showbread and the sword of Goliath. When once he is in his normal position, we have with David that which Saul had despised—the prophet, the priest—David himself being king. This history is perhaps the most sad in the scriptures. It is the history of that which had the position of faith, without the faith which would have had the reality. All he does turns to judgment. On the contrary, in the same measure as that, Saul rejects all that is of God. It is found again with David. Thus the prophet, the priest, only in suffering: but the wisdom of God there.

2 Kings 2:2. Bethel (Gen. 28, especially verse 15), where God promises to preserve Jacob, type of Israel, wherever he went, to bring him back, and not to leave him until the promises were fulfilled,

which he had made before. This name, Bethel, plays a great part in the word of God, as recalling the eternal care of God for His people. Here Elijah is type of the man Christ, who enters into the midst of the people and identifies Himself with them, starting from the principles proclaimed at Bethel.

Ver. 4. Jericho recalls the most complete curse. It was where Christ goes after His identification with the people.

Ver. 6. Jordan is death.

Ver. 8. The power of death, which falls at the touch of the power of Christ.

Ver. 9. After the victory Christ can distribute gifts. Ver. 10. If one can see Him far beyond death, He can give everything.

Ver. 14 and following. Elisha is the character of Christ, after His resurrection.

Ver. 22. He returns to Jericho and destroys the effects of the curse, and brings in blessing instead of it.

Ver. 23. He returns to Bethel—full realization of the promises made to Israel; but he exercises judgment.

Ver. 25. Then he goes to Carmel, the garden of God—millennial rest. Then one finds Elisha exercising the power of the age to come. The miracles are for the profit of the people of God.

Chapter 4

Thoughts on 1 Thessalonians 1

There is great power of walk shown forth in this chapter. It brought persecution, but the word had power in them. The world's hatred of them was a proof that there was testimony to the truth. There was the witness of it constantly brought before others, as well as that there was this inward life in power. There were faith, hope, charity (or love) (ver. 3), these three great elements of the power of life in exercise. They were laying hold of things unseen. This was faith. They were waiting in hope for what was to come. And there was the activity of love. They were not going on listlessly, but there was divine energy manifested in their everyday life. When patience was exercised, it was the “patience of hope,” and what they had to do was done in faith. How strong a link this was between them and every other Christian When the living power was seen, they were recognized as God's children: the stamp of God was upon them. We know that divine counsels and thoughts of grace were the spring of it all; but there was that which could be seen.

The word was in the Holy Ghost on hearts, and not in word only, for there was power. There must be unhesitating confidence in the things laid hold of; then there is power. If I say merely, “I suppose these things are true,” this is not assurance. But they received the gospel “in much assurance.” The result was complete distinctness from the world, which became their enemies. This was not the most pleasant part. They had “much affliction;” but then there was also “joy in the Holy Ghost.” To the Corinthians he says, “As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.”

These Thessalonians were living in another world after the word came to them in power. There was a divine spring in them that nothing could touch. In other places they might be getting on more quietly; but there was power here, and all they did was connected with God: all was done under God. This is what we have to seek. Then the testimony went forth, they scarcely knew how; but people saw there was this link with God. They did not trouble themselves about what was said of them. “Your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves show of us,” &c. That is, the world became a constant witness of what Paul's preaching was. It could be seen from the conduct of those who received it.

If we were all thoroughly faithful, the world would begin to talk about it, and there would be persecution, no doubt. “Let your light so shine before men,” &c.; not, let your good works shine, but “your light.” “Holding forth the word of life,” &c. They saw not only what the Thessalonians were doing, but they took knowledge of the new truth Paul was preaching to them. They “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven,” &c.

First, there was a total break with all they were going on in before. Not only did they abandon all the wickedness the heathen were living in, but next they served “the living and true God.” They had a new center of all they did. They “turned to God,” the living God. “They turned.... from idols.” The characteristic of these was something for and suited to the flesh. Men were looking to that which the flesh likes, and averting what the flesh did not like. There was no connection with God, nor link for the conscience in having to do with idols; but a license for lust, and all that is agreeable

to the flesh. There are those now who look to their idols to help them to pleasure and money; there is no moral difference between stocks and stones, and what is of a more refined kind now in our day. The Thessalonians turned to God, who gave perfect present blessedness. He is a true God for the conscience as well as for the heart. The world at once sees if God is the center of a person. The heart is not morbid, but thoroughly happy in God—has perfect satisfaction in Him. This is what makes such a difference in life. When a man is happy—happy in that which is eternal, what he cannot be deprived of, and which prevents his desiring other things—this is the spring of all he has to do—the glory of God, whether eating or drinking, or whatever he does.

Besides this new spring and center for the present, there is something else waited for which gives a form and character to this blessing, “waiting for his Son from heaven.” A most extraordinary thing to do Waiting for God's Son! that is, all our hopes are clean out of this world. Do not expect anything from earth, but look for something from heaven; and this God's Son Himself, “even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.” This forms a background in all this scene. There is a wrath to come to get out of. Not merely was man to be judged, but the whole scene was to be judged. When Christ returns to this earth, it will be to judge it; and they had nothing to say to the judgment. They were looking for Christ. They knew there was wrath coming, but they had nothing to say to it. Those who were looking for Christ were entirely delivered “from the wrath to come.” This gives a very distinct position to the Christian. There is very little depth of doctrine among the Thessalonians; they were only just converted: this letter was written to them directly after. But there is a great deal of the present living power of faith. “Your faith groweth exceedingly.” (2 Thess. 1) Truth, when a person is walking in the spiritual joy and energy of the Holy Ghost after being newly converted, is very different from people holding dull doctrine merely. Here is the historical fact of wrath passed. At Christ's first coming He had taken up the whole question of wrath; and they had turned to God who had laid all their iniquities on another. A divine person had taken all upon Himself—put all away entirely. All the question is totally and finally settled: sin is borne once, and He who bore it is raised from the dead. This is what proves my sin put away. The fact that God will judge the world, by that man whom He hath ordained, is what gives me the consciousness of being entirely free from it, because it proves He is risen from the dead.

This sets me in perfect freedom; and it does more, because it links me up with Christ in heaven. I know He is coming. Why? Because I know Him there. This divine Person before my mind—this Christ—this man who has died—been interested about me—died for me. He is waiting in heaven. It is now the patience of Christ. He is expecting until His enemies are made His footstool. So we are waiting. Our interests are entirely linked up with His, and so we are waiting for Him, while He is waiting to come.

There are three ways in which Christ's coming is put before our souls in scripture. First, it is the fulfillment of our hope. We are waiting, our bodies to be raised, and we are to see Him and be like Him. This gives a strong living link that takes the heart out of present things—one object before our souls, a living man who is coming again. We are really waiting for something: for what? For this person who has so loved us. This is connected with two great systems: the government of God, and the Church of God.

Government under Christ is going to be set up. All things are to be put under His feet. This applies to the appearing of the New Testament, the day of the Lord, if you look at it as to wrath—

“brightness of his coming.” I shall be happy long before that. Why then do I long for His appearing? Because Christ will then have His rights. It will be the setting up of divine power in goodness—setting up of divine righteousness too in goodness. This will be the liberty of glory. We have the liberty of grace now, but not His glory. We wait for that. The great center of all is Christ taking His rights. He has not these now. He has all His personal glory; but He will come in His own glory and in His Father's and of the holy angels. That is the heavenly part of the government of God, but there is this on earth also. It will be the manifestation of God's power to put everything in order where Christ has been crucified and cast out.

Government also applies to the Church (saints). Are we not under government? To be sure we are responsible. If we know to do good and do it not, we are guilty. We are to walk even as He walked. He was the display of divine life in a man. Not merely is there in Him the perfectness of a man before God, but the perfectness of God before man: therefore His example is far more than the law for us. Another thing is the Holy Ghost given. We are responsible for gifts bestowed by the Holy Ghost (as in the parable of the talents). If I have any service as a Christian, I must do it or I shall be chastened. He takes away what He has given if I do not use it. All this is connected with government. As His sons we are all alike saved; liable to judgment as regards our wrong ways, but in blessedness. The “day of the Lord” will be deliverance for all those waiting for Him. There will be the display of all previously gone through. We come with Him.

We always find responsibility connected with the appearing.

Another, third, thing, entirely distinct, is connected with the Church's proper blessedness. He has taken it up and given it that same place as Himself. We are wrapped up with Christ as part of Himself—entirely outside, or rather inside, the question of His kingdom. No question of government as to that, but the outgoing of the heart of Christ—loved as Himself. It is as connected with this we are caught up to meet Him—His heart identified with mine—not a thought moving His heart that does not touch mine. This promise is given us in John 14 “I will come and receive you.” There is no thought of anything to do with the world, judgment, or government there, but one single thing, “I will come and receive you unto myself.” The secondary and inferior thing is the inheritance that we shall have.

Caught up into the Father's house first, we get “the inheritance as Christ, and with Christ.” “We have borne the image of the earthy,” and we “shall also bear the image of the heavenly; no question of degrees of blessedness or rewards, but all conformed to His image—He the “firstborn of many brethren.” The next thing is, we come into the Father's delight, as Christ is loved with the same love as He is (the full enjoyment in immediate presence); it is given us now in spirit” loved them as thou hast loved me.” We shall enjoy this blessedness along with Christ Himself, and be with Him forever. “So shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. 4)

There is, of course, a great inheritance, but not a word is here about that. “Comfort one another with these words.” There is rest in this prospect. We cannot help resting there; and when He comes, we shall come with Him. Our joy is to be with Himself. We shall be displayed, but that is not our proper joy. The Church's and saints' place (I speak of the Church including all the members together, and the saints individually for themselves) is associated with Him as His body, and to be with Him when all is displayed. If we have entered into the reality of His love, and our union with Him, it is the great joy and delight of our hearts to think of being with Him.

The consequence of all this is, that when He comes forth the Church, as the “armies which were in heaven,” come with Him. They must be with Him before they come with Him. How have they got with Him? When He rises up from His present place, we shall go too. He is now hid in God, so are we. He is our life. When He shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in glory. He comes out, the Rider on the white horse, and we come with Him. We have the same portion as Himself. We are still waiting; but He is coming to take things into His hands. At His appearing everything must be in order. He cannot be in a world where all is disorder, and going on in willfulness. That will be “the day” —the display of His power; but besides and within this we have our own portion.

We love His appearing, but we love Himself better.

Therefore we wait for Him to take us to Himself. If our hearts have known what Himself is, we cannot confound His taking us to Himself, with His appearing. We are “members of His body.” “Our life is hid,” &c. He is to take us up to the Father's house, the fullness of His own blessedness—with Christ; the blessed outshining of His Father's love connects itself with the Church's position. All through there is an identity of blessedness with Christ in life, hope, object, &c. If this hope is let into the heart, there must be a break with the world. I cannot be waiting for God's Son from heaven if I am expecting wrath; and I cannot be waiting for God's Son from heaven if I am linked up with the world. If this world is the scene where my heart is building itself up, if I have an object in this world, Christ will spoil it all.

Suppose God said, “To-night,” &e.; would you say, That is what I want? If not, there is something between your affections and Christ.

No trial can touch a person who has Christ for his all. He may have lost this or lost that; but if he has Christ he has that which he cannot lose.

Achill Herald Appendix

The author's charges differ from the Bishop of Kilmore's. There is no reason for evading either—least of all for not meeting the more violent of the two.

I have replied to Dr. Verschoyle elsewhere, and now proceed to refute the rector of Skreen.

(1.) Mr. Nangle's statement is, that those he calls Darbyites “reject a ministry set apart by the laying on of hands to rule and teach the Church, as laid down in the Apostle Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus, and various other parts of the New Testament. That they do reject such a ministry is notorious, and the apologist of the sect does not dare to deny it.” It is evident that he does not understand the matter; nor should one be surprised at this.

All is confusion in Christendom on the point. The Roman Catholic does not allow the validity of Anglican orders, though the Anglicans own those of Rome, for a recanting Romish priest never undergoes presbyterial ordination within the English Establishment. The Presbyterian reckons episcopacy a fiction. The independent rests the essence of his call on the choice of the congregation, as the Presbyterian does in a measure. Thus for the most part the theories and practice of Christendom, if applied and held fast, are mutually destructive; one only could be true.

“Brethren” believe that not one of these conflicting schemes is according to God's word; because even those who have a measure of right, in upholding the truth of apostolic authority as the sole adequate ordaining power, falsely pretend that the modern bishop succeeds to this authority. If “Brethren” arrogated such a claim to themselves, they would be as wrong as their neighbors; but as long as they hold to the truth in this respect, they will avoid this error of Christendom. They leave it to others, who have as little real ground as themselves, to imitate an apostle or an apostolic delegate. Instead of aspiring to an authority which “Brethren” frankly own they do not possess, and which they firmly believe neither Roman Catholics nor other Episcopalians possess one jot more than themselves, they thank God for the gifts which remain, being amongst themselves more or less as also among the members of Christ's body everywhere.

I flatly deny, then, that they reject a ministry set apart by the laying on of hands, as laid down in 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and elsewhere. It is notorious that they on the contrary hold so tenaciously to the due scriptural order as to reject the poor and baseless imitations of this current among modern Episcopalians, and still more the substitution of the popular voice for it, which passes among Dissenters. But they hold that the Lord (as from the first, even whilst apostles and their delegates appointed elders) gives such gifts (evangelists, pastors, teachers, &c.) as are needed for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. From the beginning, there was the free exercise of gift within and without the Church, beside the local charges of elders, &c., which needed orderly appointment. Have gifts ceased, because apostolic authority no longer exists?

1 am grieved to say that the charge of evasion under the head of confessing sins is inexcusable, not to say worse. The Bishop of Kilmore was misinformed if he thought “Brethren” held that the

confession of sins is to be laid aside by those who have already received forgiveness; for they would support himself in resisting that grave error. Mr. N.'s hostility forthwith suspects evil couched underneath a straightforward denial: any candid gracious soul would be gratified by it, because he loves to hear good of his brethren and rejoices to have a prejudice removed. What does Mr. N. say and feel? “We have here another evasion put forth as a reply to my charge. I never denied that the Darbyites, as a body, insist on the duty of a believer to confess his sins; but I did and do charge them with the grievous error that a believer needs not daily to pray for the forgiveness of his sins.” How comes this shifting of the point before us? Why does he charge the reply to Dr. Verschoyle with “evasion” because his own different statement was not answered? Did he forget that the reply was to Dr. V. not to himself? Again, why did he “adopt” the Bishop of Kilmore's words on this head if he never believed of “Brethren” what the Bishop imputes? Was this upright? Is it lawful to use another's words against the “Brethren,” which, when exposed, you deny that you ever held, and then to substitute quite a different statement, with a confident accusation that your charge (which was not in question) is evaded? This is what Mr. N. has done. I do not think any worthy members of his own party will approve of it.

No intelligent Christian objects to the Common Prayer Book on the ground here alleged, but to the merging saints and sinners in a common petition and confession of sins, to the exceeding detriment of the converted, to the imminent peril of the unconverted, and above all to the trampling under foot of the primary idea, the express design, and revealed character of God's Church.

To be precise, let me add, first, that “Brethren” do ask forgiveness of their sins; secondly, that confession goes beyond this. Who does not know, save the thoughtless, that it is far easier to ask forgiveness than to confess honestly and thoroughly? Have you never felt it? Have you not seen it in your child? For what are sins confessed, if not to seek forgiveness from our Father?

Neither is there any evasion as to the Lord's prayer. I have never hinted that it was used at meetings of “Brethren,” though there is no rule expressed or understood against such a thing. It is evident that the Lord gave it for the closet use (Matt. 6:6) of His disciples, who were regenerate at that very time and had not yet received the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete. I believe that it abides for such use on the part of disciples in a similar condition; but that it never was intended for souls after they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise and possessed (not merely the title, but) the Spirit of sonship. This vast change is, I am convinced, the teaching of our Lord Himself in John 16:24-26. The disciples had been no doubt for a long time using the Lord's prayer; yet the Lord tells them “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name.” “At that day ye shall ask in my name.” “That day” is now come: are we as the disciples were? or, having received the Comforter, are we asking the Father in Christ's name? To my mind this distinction is clear and certain; but Mr. N. counts it “shuffling by which your correspondent endeavors to exonerate the sect from this sanctimonious blasphemy,” and then talks about the distinction already pointed out in such a style as to show himself wholly in the dark on this subject. “If any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.”

From these bold and bitter, bit powerless words, in the face of our Lord's declaration and the evident facts of scripture, it is refreshing to turn to the excellent and learned Dr. John Owen. None can say that Cromwell's Vice-Chancellor of Oxford Plymouthized; none can deny that for spiritual judgment be is incomparably beyond any of the adversaries of the “Brethren.” His orthodoxy and his piety are unimpeachable; yet his doctrine (as far as it goes), and no doubt his practice, as to

the Lord's prayer, accords with ours. “Let it therefore be taken for granted that our Savior did command that form to be repeated by His disciples, and let us then consider what will regularly ensue thereupon. Our Savior at that time was minister of the circumcision, and taught the doctrine of the gospel under and with the observation of all the worship of the Judaical church. He was not yet glorified, and so the Spirit was not as yet given; I mean that Spirit which He promised unto His disciples to enable them to perform all the worship of God by Him required at their hands, whereof we have before spoken. That, then, which the Lord Jesus prescribed unto His disciples for their present practice in the worship of God, seems to have belonged unto the economy of the Old Testament. Now, to argue from the prescription of, and outward helps for, the performance of the worship of God under the Old Testament, unto a necessity of the like or the same under the New, is upon the matter to deny that Christ is ascended on high, and to have given spiritual gifts unto men eminently distinct from and above those given out by Him under the Judaical pedagogy.” (Works, Vol. 15, p. 14, Goold's ed.) Of course, I attach not the smallest authority to Dr. 0.; but it suffices to evince the abuse and lack of knowledge on our accuser's part.

(4.) It is in vain to appeal to 1 John 2:8; 3:18, 19 to prove that scripture makes the full assurance of our acceptance to depend on our works or our experiences. The apostle treats of a wholly different question and assumes, in this very epistle, that the former was already settled even for the babes of the family of God. See 1 John 2:12.; v. 13. There were those who sought even in that early day to set up Gnostic conceits, to despise love and holiness, and to assert the necessity of their teaching for the children of God. Hence, not to raise internal questions, but to comfort the true saints, and to expose these aspiring false teachers, the apostle says, “Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.” There is no thought of insinuating an inquiry whether their own faith was real. So in chapter 3 it is expressly a question of “assurance of heart;” not of ascertaining one's individual interest in Christ, but of keeping our confidence toward God unbroken. But I quite agree that without holiness (practically) no man shall see the Lord; and that carelessness of ways even in a real saint is always destructive of spiritual enjoyment.

So far is it from being true that individuals among “Brethren” are insensible to discipline, that one of the greatest hindrances we know is from the spirit of in-subjection which prevails generally over Christendom. When the high-minded among us receive censure beyond their grace to endure, sometimes they resent it by going back to the country whence they came out, or by making a party of their own. It is commonly alleged against “Brethren” that they take “the best” from the various religious societies. Others are perhaps better judges of this. We can thankfully say that none but our worst or weakest leave us to join any denomination. The singular fact is, that our adversaries do not seem to perceive how serious for themselves are both these allegations, if true. And who can deny them?

I am sorry that the most prejudiced Christian should judge it wrong, when souls established in Christ are taught any truth they need, particularly what is so near to Christ and so practically necessary to our walk and worship as the nature of God's Church. But I can well understand why some are sensitive on this head.

I had almost omitted to add that our reason for not putting forth creeds, or articles of faith, is not in the smallest degree because of diversity of opinion. Tracts and books, however, by men respected among us are abundant and accessible. Why not quote fairly from them, instead of imputing to

“Brethren” sentiments which they abhor? First, it is evident to us, that symbols of faith do not secure unanimity in Mr. N.'s system, which affords to all men the spectacle of compelling men to sign what they openly deny, without an approach to the right use of ecclesiastical discipline (though the second part of the Homily for Whitsunday declares this to be one of the three notes or marks whereby the true church is known). Secondly, it is equally clear that the Church of God walked without these Egyptian reeds during its best days here below, as we are seeking to do now by the grace of the Savior.

As to the reproach of being a conglomerate of the errors of the Quakers, the Anabaptists, and the Antinomians, with supplemental errors increasing and special, it is not worth more answer than that of our scandalous immoralities. I retort nothing; I appeal to those who have knowledge and conscience.

Chapter 6

Adam and Christ

There is a second man into whose condition we are brought. The first man was the highest in order as a creature and withal responsible. But through the second man, the Lord from heaven, he has a place far above all creatures, being brought into the place (by redemption) of the son of God himself as man—the responsibility of his old place met, but a new place given. This last is not creation, but new creation

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Chapter 9

All Will Give Account of Themselves to God

Surely there is great gain in light and love in giving an account of ourselves to God. Not a trace then remains of our old evil: we shall be like Christ. If a person fears to have all out thus before God, I do not believe he is free in soul as to righteousness, as to being the righteousness of God in Christ. He is not fully in the light. Has the Christian to enter into judgment for anything? Christ has put sin all away.

Chapter 10

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Baptism and the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 10) are for the wilderness. One introduces into the wilderness, but it is Christ's death, not mine only. I thereon reckon myself dead as a consequence, planted in baptism in the likeness of His. But we have not in Romans resurrection with Him; and, even where we have, as I think we must say in Col. 2, no ascension, no Canaan.

As the one brings into, the other sustains in, the wilderness. So we show forth Christ's death till He come. I am on the earth, but in the consciousness of being a member of the one body, which implies union with Christ; but it is on earth I celebrate it, not in heaven; i.e., not as being there myself. I look at the humiliation as over with Him, but remember Him in it. Our service in it is simply owning the preciousness of His death, till He come. Our state is in resurrection; but we are occupied and celebrate His having been once down here and show forth His death. The question is, Where are we when we celebrate it? In the wilderness.

Chapter 11

Bethel, Penial, Beersheba

There are four stages in the journey of the life of Jacob (see Gen. 25-49): his residence at home in Canaan; his sojourn in Padan-aram; his second residence in Canaan; his sojourn and death in Egypt.

Between these four stages there are three links or times of transition, which we may call Bethel, Peniel, and Beersheba.

Bethel, or the scene there, happens as he journeys from Canaan to Padan-aram.

Peniel, or the scene there, happens as he journeys back from Padan-aram to Canaan.

Beersheba, or the scene there, happens as he journeys from Canaan down to Egypt.

These are the eras in the life of Jacob, and the transitions from one to the other. I would now meditate on these transition scenes, or on Bethel, Peniel, and Beersheba.

Jacob had offended the Lord, having taken the way of nature, in listening to the counsels of unbelief touching the blessing. He is therefore put under discipline, that he may learn the bitterness of his own way. His place of stones, the very night on which he left his father's house, witnessed this. It was the fruit of his transgression, but it told that God was his God still. It is the place of discipline, however, and not of sin. God can therefore own it and visit it. Had it been the tent where he and his mother had dressed the kids for Isaac's feast, God could not have owned it, for iniquity was practiced there: but Luz, or the place of discipline, the Lord can visit with His presence.

He does accordingly come, and He comes to make glory a great reality to His servant. He does not come to soften his pillow, or to change his condition, sending him back to enjoy the home of his father and the care of his mother. He leaves Jacob still to taste the bitterness of departure from God, but comes to make glory and heaven great realities to him. Onwards, therefore, this chastened child of God goes, and for twenty years knows the bonds of an injurious taskmaster in Padan-aram.

In due season he is on his way back: But it is a different Jacob we now see, as well as a different journey. He was an empty Jacob at Bethel, he is now a full Jacob at Peniel. He has become two bands. Flocks and herds, and servants and wives and children, tell of his prosperity. He has become a rich man. He has a stake in the world. He has something to lose, something which may make him an object and a prey.

He bears of Esau coming with four hundred men. He trembles. He manages as well as he can, religiously committing all to God. But still, unbelief has mastered his heart, and he is in fear of his revengeful brother.

The Lord comes to him; but He comes in a new character altogether. He had been a child under discipline at Bethel, he is an unbelieving child now; and the Lord comes not to comfort him as

then, but to rebuke and restore him. “There wrestled a man with him till the breaking of the day.” This was the Lord in controversy with Jacob's unbelief touching Esau. But what is the issue of this controversy? Grace is made a great reality to Jacob now, as glory had been before. The wrestling Stranger in abounding grace allows himself to be prevailed over by the weak and timid Jacob, and the spirit of faith revives in the soul of Jacob. Very blessed this is. He comes “boldly to the throne of grace.” He says, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.” And Jacob becomes Israel. The unbelieving Jacob is restored now, as the chastened Jacob had been comforted before. Grace is made a great reality to him now, as glory had been to him then. At Bethel he walked at the gate of heaven, here he walks in the presence of God. Christ was giving him promises at Bethel; He is giving him embraces at Peniel. He was opening His house to him there; He is opening His heart to him here.

Such was Bethel, and such was Peniel to Jacob: such is God to him in his various need. Heaven was shown to him in the day of his sorrow; restoring grace in its exhaustless treasures in the day of his failure.

But Beersheba is still to be visited, and it has its peculiar character also. Nature had spoken very quickly in Jacob, when on hearing that Joseph was alive and governor of Egypt, and seeing the wagons which he had sent to take him to that country, he said, “It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive, I will go down and see him before I die.” This was just nature; and though nature may speak rightly in a saint, yet its voice ought always to be challenged, for it may be wrong as well as right. In a calmer moment of his soul, this decision, this unchallenged decision of nature, becomes the occasion of uneasiness to Jacob; and it is this uneasiness, as I surely judge, that gives us Beersheba. For, I may ask, Why the sacrifices there? “And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.”

This is remarkable. And why all this? I ask. There had been no altar at Mamre before he had set out. Why this delay at Beersheba on the road? The spiritual sense has now been awakened, and the saint feels reserve where the father had felt none. Very common this is with the people of God. Nature had acted at Mamre, but now that the mind of Christ awakes to take the lead, the judgment of nature is reviewed.

Many years before this the Lord had said to Isaac, “go not down into Egypt,” and had said this to him in a day of famine in Canaan, as was the present. (See chap. 26:1, 2.) Faith reviving in the soul of Jacob at Beersheba (lying on the southernmost border as you go to Egypt), this is remembered, and Jacob pauses. Uneasiness is felt when faith thus challenges the verdict of nature. And God is sought, the God of Isaac. Most fitly so; for it was the word of the God of Isaac which had awakened this conflict and uneasiness. The word of the Lord, as we have now seen, had raised a wall or dug a gulf between Isaac and Egypt. So that this delay at Beersheba, and these sacrifices, tell the secret of Jacob's soul, that faith, and not nature, was now taking, the lead of the motives that were stirring there.

Very lovely this is, and very precious with God, as the sequel of this perfect little story of other days at Beersheba tells us. God comes to Jacob, and comes at once upon the raising up of the altar at Beersheba. He had been with him before, as we saw, on his way from Canaan to Padan-aram, and again on his way back from Padan-aram to Canaan; and now is He with him on his way from Canaan to Egypt. At Bethel, as we also saw, He had made glory or heaven a great

reality to the chastened sorrowing Jacob. At Peniel He had made grace, in its restoring virtue, a great reality to the timid and fainting Jacob, and now at Beersheba He makes divine sympathy a great reality to the tender self-judging Jacob.

The communion between the Lord and His elect one here is full of the witness of this. The Lord lets him know that He was acquainted with all the workings, both of nature and of the spiritual mind in him, that He had marked the path of his soul from Mamre to Beersheba. “I am God,” said the Lord in a vision of the night to him, “I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt I will go down with thee and Joseph shall put his hands upon thine eyes.”

What a communication this was! How thoroughly did it disclose this most comforting truth, that the Lord had read all his heart, his present fears, his earlier affections, the mind of the father and the mind of the saint in him, the desire of nature and the sensibility and suggestion of grace. “Fear not to go down to Egypt” calmed his present saintly apprehensions; “Joseph shall put his hands upon thine eyes” gratified the earlier motions of a father's heart. How full and perfect all this was! What a reality it proved communion or the sympathy of Christ to be!

“When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, thou knewest my path.” The groan that cannot be uttered has entered, with exactest meaning, the ear of Him who searches the heart. All this is now made a great reality to Jacob, and in the joy of this he goes onward. How could he any longer fear Egypt? How could he question any longer the desire of indulging his fatherly affections? All was answered and satisfied, and Jacob resumed his journey, and accomplished it. “And Jacob rose up from Beersheba.... and they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him.”

Rich and wondrous instructions! Glory is made a reality to Jacob at Bethel, grace is made a reality to him at Peniel, and divine sympathy is made a reality to him at Beersheba.

I might add “Shechem” to these cases. Correction is made a great reality to Jacob's conscience there. The Lord told him to go from it to Bethel, for his way there was evil; and he sets himself on the journey, not only at once, but under a purifying of his whole house, showing how his spirit had received correction. (See chap. 35:1, 2.)

Chapter 12

Brought to God

After the establishment of our faith in the great truths of the epistles, we are led back to the gospels, to enter into and dwell upon the blessedness and fullness of Him, in whom all the truths have their center and accomplishment.

Chapter 13

Scripture Query and Answer: By My Name Jehovah Was I Not Known to Them

Q. I have always had difficulty with the exact meaning of Ex. 6:3: “By my name Jehovah was I not known to them.” This seems very absolute. I have written out all the places where the word Jehovah occurs. I find it occurs 195 times until Ex. 6:3. With the great majority (144) of these I have not the slightest difficulty (e.g., in Gen. 2), and with the remainder (49 times) I have some difficulty. In the 144 times in which there seems little difficulty, it is as is shown in “B. T."-Moses showing Israel (for whom he wrote by the Spirit) that it was their Jehovah who was Elohim, and therefore it is always in the form of reported speech. I have classified the 49 difficult passages into four classes. First, where persons (before Ex. 6:4) speak of Elohim as Jehovah, not in reported but in ‘direct' speech. They either did use the word Jehovah or they did not. To take an example (Gen. 28:21), Jacob said, “Then shall Jehovah be my Elohim;” and, chapter 32:9, Jacob said, “O Elohim of my father Abraham, and Elohim of my father Isaac, Jehovah which saidst unto me,” &c. If they used the word Jehovah, then Elohim was known to them by that name; or, did they use it without knowing its meaning (did not; ■■■■ in Hebrews mean I am that I am)? If they did not use the word Jehovah, then the reporter (Moses) gives us their meaning, but represents that he gives us their word, and this going against the plenary inspiration, of course could not be maintained. Secondly—Men calling on the name Jehovah, not on Elohim, as if at that time they began for the first time to know Him as Jehovah. This, however, not being in the form of direct speech, but rather reported, does not present the same difficulty. Thirdly—Angels using the name Jehovah directly to men, where the same difficulty presents as in the first. Fourthly—God Himself using the name directly to Abram and Jacob (I do not lay much stress on the three found in Exodus, but have added them for the sake of completeness). Gen. 15:7, Jehovah said, “I Jehovah that brought thee,” &c., and similarly to Jacob in chapter 28:13, where the difficulty is as in the first.

If Jehovah was known before its formal revelation (without knowing its meaning), is this analogous to the other? e.g., Shaddai was not known till Abraham; Abba was not known till He declared it and sent forth the Spirit into our hearts. Is Jehovah exceptional? W. P. M.

A. There is, I think, no difficulty in Ex. 6:8. If we compare Ex. 3:14, 15, we find there Jehovah the God of thy fathers. It was the personal name of God as having to do with men, and particularly with Israel—man in the flesh set in relationship with God. It is His abiding name as to this world, either who was, and is, and is to come, if we take Him historically, or more perfectly as in Revelation who is (■ ■υ), and was, and is to come, the 6 &'v, the existing one (alta her), and past in time, and to come. But in Ex. 6:3, it is different. It speaks of the character in which He revealed Himself in order to their walking before Him. And note, when the revelation of Shaddai, as the name to be owned in walk took place, it is said Jehovah appeared unto Abram; and the word was, “I (Jehovah) am El Shaddai; walk before me.” Hence, in Ex. 6:3, “I am Jehovah; and I appeared (vaeera) unto Abraham (2) as El Shaddai: (in) my name Jehovah was I not (made) known to them.” This refers to the appearing to put Himself according to the nature of that revelation in relationship with

Himself. So to Jacob (Gen. 35:11), as soon as God revealed Himself to him. To Isaac, who stands connected with Rebekah, the risen head of the Church, He is not revealed by any name.

The historical name is always Jehovah or Elohim. The One who appears is always Jehovah; but He appears to Abraham as El Shaddai, and so reveals Himself as the ground of, and that which gives its character to, his walk before Him. But it is always Jehovah who appears, as in chapter xii. 7. In chapter 15:7, it is no appearing. The word of Jehovah came to Abraham and said, “I am Jehovah that brought thee out of Ur.” And in Psa. 91, the title Shaddai is used as the expression of almighty protection; and Messiah says as knowing the true secret of who the Most High is: “I will say of Jehovah,” &c. And so He is kept by the power of Shaddai. Thus, I judge, that though Jehovah, as the expression of the constant being of God, was taken as the specific covenant name of Israel's God, the God of man in the flesh who had to say to God; yet it was, as the name of constant being, the abiding historical name of God. Almighty and Father are special names of character and relationship taken with those to whom God is so revealed. The name of the one true God, the name of the being, is His abiding name, in relationship with the earth—the name. The Israelite had “blasphemed the name.” Most High is another relative name taken. Hence it is only in the millennium fully. But it is still Jehovah who is the Most High. Hence you would not have the angel of Shaddai or the Father, or Elion, because he represents His power as such, not a name of relationship; but he took His name as the name of relationship with Israel. It was not that the name of Jehovah was not known as the proper name of the true God, but that His making Himself known to them, as the One before whom they were to walk, was in another specific name. He did not take His name, His own name so to speak, as the name by which He was to be in relationship with them. It is a very important circumstance as to Israel that God's own name, what I may call His personal name, at least in connection with man on earth, “the name” became the name of relationship with that people. Hence in celebrating that name, even in the wide extent of the unopened glory, in the past which belongs to earth, we have (Psa. 8), O Jehovah, our Adon, how excellent is thy name in all the earth. He had set in that His glory now above the heavens. Elohim is the One who stands in the position of the divine being. Jehovah is the personal name of Him who truly is so. He became the Elohim of the Jews as a nation who had been called out of the world to and by Him when idolatry had come in. (Josh. 24) Jehovah, He is Elohim. And now we say, Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent; but withal of the Son, He is the true God and eternal life. When it is said then Jehovah shall be my Elohim, (Gen. 28:21), we must refer to verse 13, whence Jacob drew that which he then said, and so verse 16. But in Ex. 6:2, we have equally, “I am Jehovah.” But in Gen. 35, when Elohim reveals Himself to Jacob as the present God with whom he had to do, it is again (ver. 11) El Shaddai. Jehovah is found in chapters xxxi. 3; xxxii. 9. In a word, Jehovah was not unknown to their own thoughts or in intercourse; but it was not the name He took in relation to the patriarchs in their character as such; it was with Israel after the bush.

Chapter 14

The Calling and Hope of the Christian

The right application of the truth of the Church in both its calling and its hopes depends, more than many Christians are aware, upon the spiritual condition of the soul. I doubt not, indeed, that spiritual condition has much to do with all apprehension of divine truth, but of this beyond all others, for the simple reason that the Church's privileges are so boundless and so special that the mind of man and even the heart of the believer find no small difficulty in accepting them simply in their integrity. The very conscience of the believer makes a difficulty unless there be a child-like acceptance of the word and grace of God. We can easily understand this; for it is natural even to the believer to mingle the question of his own feelings of acceptance with the reception of the truth of God. He examines himself, but finds only unworthiness; he feels painfully, humiliatingly, day by day, his own shortcomings and positive faults. Such being the fact, it looks a hard thing to receive the astonishing truth that grace has given even him oneness with Christ.

Yet the great distinctive feature of the Christian's calling is found in these very words, “Together with Christ.” Sovereign grace can alone account for it. As God claimed and exercised the title, at all times, to bless according to His good pleasure, so now He puts the members of Christ's body in the place that seems good to Him. He looks for unqualified submission in our hearts. And in proportion as we are simple in bowing to God, His grace and truth open far more largely and more distinctly on our souls. Now the bearing of this will soon be seen as I make a few remarks upon the scripture just read. The subject is the Church's calling and hopes—the latter, of course, in connection with the coming of the Lord. The Holy Ghost opens the subject with a kind of allusion to Israel's place. They were the chosen people, but it was on earth and for the earth. I do not deny that there were elect men in Israel, upon whose hearts brighter hopes dawned. No doubt Abraham was but a sample of the faithful. And indeed in the dealings of God, before there was a people called, there were those who looked by faith beyond the earth, who saw what is brighter than earthly hopes. But here we have a different character of blessing: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” The heavenly places are clearly in contrast with Israel's earthly place. Now Israel looked, and rightly looked, to be thus blessed here below; indeed, it is to disparage the word of God to lose sight of this: God will make it good to them in a future day.

But we ourselves are in the same place as these believers, addressed by the Apostle Paul—“Blessed with all spiritual blessings.... in Christ.” That little word, “in Christ,” is the key to it all. In one sense a Christian is nothing in himself; in Christ he has everything. Let my heart only get hold of this precious truth. Christ now shows what a Christian is in the presence of God. No doubt, besides being the risen man, He is also God, the object of worship, equal with the Father. He has a divine right to all, yet is He pleased to possess all as the glorified man by right of redemption. He came into this world. He had the only claim as man, for He alone had accomplished God's will. He was the perfect manifestation of what man ought to be to God under law, and He was the perfect manifestation of what God is to man in love, He was above law—it was grace. If the law dealt with evil, it must destroy. Grace takes the supremacy. It shows grace to those who do not deserve it.

Christ as under law showed perfectly what God's will was. Then He manifested what God is to man. It was His place to manifest perfect grace and truth. Christ takes the inheritance neither as man or God only, but as Redeemer. He suffered on the cross that He might have others to share it, others to say, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.” It was only in resurrection that the Lord Jesus took all things. When upon earth He did not take the inheritance; He took sorrow, He took shame, He took suffering—every kind of hatred from man. He took God's judgment about sin. In this He was alone upon the cross, because there the wonderful problem was being solved, how sin could be put away. Christ abolished sin that God might justly justify, that God might manifest all His character.

Here, however, it is a larger measure than merely justifying. God blesses with all spiritual blessings in Christ. He had never uttered such language before. In the Old Testament there is not such a thought as Christ having members. You have a king reigning in righteousness, and nations blest through Christ that blessed One who will take all things from God. What we have here is quite different. It is God not only pardoning, and not merely justifying, but making Christians to be the members of Christ, of His flesh, and of His bones. Here we have language rising above everything that believers had before redemption. There is no disparagement of the privileges of saints before, but what I am anxious to show is that Christians are not generally alive to their own privileges.

The first thing to point out is this, “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Mark the language. It is God acting in this especial manner of relationship. He means to bless the believer as He blesses Christ. That is, not as Christ is blest as a divine person—that would be blasphemy. Here we have what is bestowed upon Him as man in heaven. “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them” is a kindred truth. Christ as the risen man is exalted on high, having glory conferred on Him as the risen man that by the grace of God had died. The risen man is also God, but we must never confound His deity with His humanity. As thus risen He said, “I ascend unto my God and your God, unto my Father and your Father.” Here we have His and our God and Father, and the apostle shows that we reap infinite blessing from each of these relationships. As God of our Lord Jesus, He gives us to partake in the divine nature, holy and blameless before Him in love. He means to have men in heaven along with Jesus. To have that blessed glorified man there is not enough. He gives Jesus companions. These companions of His must have, of course, the divine nature morally. (2 Peter 1)

Again, angels are servants: they never rise above the nature of servants. The archangel even never rises above the place of a servant. The angels are called the sons of God in a certain sense, as all men are by virtue of creation. Angels are a spiritual class of beings, but they have not the intimacy of those born of God, the place of children, the Spirit of adoption, &c. Now I call your attention to this, because it is but feebly understood by Christians in general. It is not presumption to know that our sins are forgiven. I would ask any person who knows the name of Christ, who loves Him, On what ground is it that you take the place of a believer? On what ground have you received favor from God? Do you believe in Jesus as One that suffered for sins? I ask you, Has He done the work perfectly or has He not? There is no believer who would not at once answer, Yes—perfectly. Then as surely as you are a believer, you have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. If you have not this forgiveness, when can you have it? Christ will not suffer again. Suffering and offering go together. They must go together in the mind of God. Once

purged is the word for a Christian—once, because it has been done perfectly, done forever. Now I maintain that it is done for every Christian. Every Christian owes it to Christ to believe unhesitatingly that He has done perfectly the work of putting away sin. There may be failures. Far would I be from saying that a believer should not confess failure always. Daily failure calls tor daily humbling before God. Still the fact of redemption remains unchanged. Take the case of a child: he may offend and offend grievously, but he remains your child all the same. The more you enforce on him that he is your child, the more is his failure felt, as it is the worse in itself. In the same way, instead of the holding fast our relationship, really weakening the sense of sin, it is the very and only ground of judging it aright. It is that which makes sin to be most exceedingly sinful.

We have here the full roll of Christian privilege. How striking it is in all this passage there is not a word said about our original condition as sinners. In the Epistle to the Romans it is quite another method. In Eph. 2 we have a deeper character of sin than we have even in Romans" dead in trespasses and sins," &c. But first we find God unfolding His counsels which refer to the Christian. It was a purpose of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, entirely apart from man's condition upon earth. We find here the very blessed truth that redemption is no mere remedy, it was the first choice of God. God counseled and determined in Himself, before there were any creatures at all; He determined to have beings in heaven capable of fellowship with Himself and with His Son. Then He allowed man to be tried upon earth. This took place with Israel, &c. When the wickedness of the world rose to its height in the cross of Christ, at that very moment when Jew and Gentile united to kill the Lord of glory, God answered their awful conspiracy by bringing out His richest grace. God showed through and in His Son a salvation that not only meets man ruined upon earth, but that would give man an everlasting portion with. Christ in the presence of God. The Church consists not merely of persons pardoned and saved, of people looking to heaven; it has a deeper character of relationship; it implies union with Christ in heaven. This is what God imparts to believers now.

The next thing taken up here is that God not only brings us into this astonishing place of blessing, but opens His secrets: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will." Thus, first of all, He makes us holy in Christ; next, He gives us the place of sons to Himself; and then He makes known to us what He is going to do. And what is that? To put the entire universe under Christ, to have all in heaven, all on earth, put under the glorified man. This is the first part of the secret of God's will; the next is, that the believers now—all believers in Christ—are made joint-heirs with Christ over this inheritance. Not that we are the inheritance: the Jewish people will be a part of the inheritance; but the peculiar character of Christians, that is, they are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

As to this, the simple question is, What does scripture say? What is the teaching of God on this head? It is said to be a mystery, which means that which could not be found out by the wit of man, but what can be understood when revealed. "The mystery of Christ" consisted in this—Christ, the center of all God's dealings, and believers now united to Him. There is nothing wonderful in the Son of God being over all things. God the Father could not be said to confer anything upon God the Son as such: it would deny His supreme deity. But yet it is perfectly certain from scripture that Jesus now receives all from God the Father. A man is at the right hand of God!—a man is the object of heaven's delight and adoration! But more. By the Holy Ghost the Church is united with this glorified man, the spiritual Eve of the last Adam. The Church is the bride, the Lamb's wife, as it is the body of the glorified Christ who is Head over all things. Thus it is written at the end of this

chapter. Christ is said to be “Head over all things to the church, which is his body.” The Church is really associated with Christ over all things, “the fullness of him that filleth all in all.”

The wonderful mystery is here made known—the Church called into oneness with Christ. Into this one body we are baptized by the Spirit now; and now is the time that the believer is responsible to receive it into his soul, and to manifest it in his ways. Of course it is a matter of faith; for, as to his body, he is the same as any other man. He can only triumph through Christ; but he has Christ in glory not only as his righteousness but his life, yea, one with Him. All that God confers upon Christ, Christ shares with the Church. The effect is immediate and immense. Suppose a person were to wake up to the fact that he was the queen's son, would it not have a mighty influence practically on him? So, to be given now to know not merely that a person is saved, but that he shares with Christ all that He possesses, that he is a member of His body, that he is viewed now as perfect by God in Christ: such is the position of a Christian. It is not that one does not take into account a Christian's failure: I do, but the way to feel our failure most is to hold fast our relationship to Christ. Upon Christian doctrine is founded Christian practice.

As the believer even now is set in this blessed place of enjoyment, God has sent down the Holy Ghost to dwell in him, in such a sort as never was before. There never was a time when the Holy Ghost did not work; He beyond all doubt is the active agent in all the dealings of God from creation downwards. There could be no power of God at work in man without the Spirit of God. But not the less do I maintain along with this, that the Lord Jesus Christ prepared the disciples for a greater blessing than either they or others had ever known before. He told them “it is expedient for you that I go away,” &c. What could make up for such a loss? The answer is, “if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” It is contrary to Scripture or even sense to suppose that it was merely prolonging something they possessed before. Nay, there was a deeper blessing. It was the same Spirit that had made them born anew, but He was now for the first time sent down from heaven to dwell in the saints.

Who had ever been thus blessed before? Yes, there was One who had enjoyed Him thus. Who was that One person who had been the temple of God upon earth? It was Jesus. Upon Him, the Holy Ghost came not as a flame of fire, but as a dove, the witness of the perfect spotlessness of Jesus. The humanity of Jesus being absolutely pure and holy (Luke 1), there was not the least hindrance to the dwelling Of the Holy Ghost in Him. We can understand Jesus being bodily the temple or habitation of the Holy Ghost; but how could it be true of us, evil and defiled as we are by nature? Christ has so perfectly put away the sin and sins of a believer, that it is as though the evil, root, branch, and fruit, had never been. Hence the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven, and actually now dwells in the believer, as the proof and result of the perfect putting away of sin by Christ's sacrifice.

The saints of old were waiting for what was coming; they knew there were good things to come. “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.” (1 Peter 1:12.)

Manifestly then there is a special blessing in the gift of the Spirit consequent upon redemption. When we know and weigh what redemption is, there will be less difficulty. It is a poor partial notion of redemption as an accomplished fact that makes people ask, Why should not God always act in

the same way? The right understanding of its infinite work teaches us, that God sees such virtue in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ that He reserves a special blessing for that hour. The believer now is blessed with, and will share, His supremacy over all things.

What makes us members of the body of Christ? We are made so by the Spirit, and not by faith only. Of course, no one but a believer has this place; but it is nowhere said to be by faith, but by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. 12) The saints of old time were not baptized into this one body. There was nothing of the kind. The Jew preserved his separate place; the Gentile might come in (as a proselyte), but there was no identity: still less was either one or other made one with Christ. In Christianity these distinctions disappear. There was faith among the Old Testament saints, but there was no “one body” yet; not even when our Lord was upon earth. He told the disciples that He was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The cross of Christ, on man's side of it, was a joining of all men (Jew and Gentile) in wickedness; on God's side it led to a joining of Jew and Gentile in common blessing by grace. In Matt. 16, Peter answers Christ's demand with the confession, “Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.” Christ says, “Upon this rock I will build my Church.” What does He mean by this? Peter confesses His glory not only as Messiah or the Christ, but as Son of the living God. He was marked out the Son of God by resurrection from the dead. “He is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead.

What hope is suited to such a calling? Jesus says, “Let not your heart be troubled. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go, I will come again and receive you unto myself.” The portion that Christ has is the portion of a Christian. Even now He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. As He took our portion on the cross, so we have His portion in glory. He will bless the Jews on earth. God promised to do so. Whereas, He has in title blessed us with Christ in heaven. Some think the mystery was that the Gentiles were to be called, but this is plainly referred to in the Old Testament. The mystery goes much farther, namely, that all who now believe, Jews and Gentiles, should be united together as the one body of Christ, head over all things.

Our hope is for Christ to come and take us to be with Himself in the Father's house. This implies the highest scene of enjoyment even in heaven. Can any place there be too high for Christ? Assuredly not. The Father manifests His love for His Son thus. If God gives us such a place in Christ, we ought to believe it; and this is not merely for ourselves, but for every believer, for every Christian. This, and nothing less than this, is the portion of all who believe the gospel. Christ will come Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. We shall be with Himself, in that glory which is entirely above the world. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come.” (Rev. 22:17.) To say “Come,” depends not on great knowledge, but on His great salvation and love.

It cannot be too much insisted on that there is no difference between the standing of one believer and another. When you come to a question of faithfulness, there are degrees; but to suppose a difference in the whiteness of the robe, or the righteousness we are made, is to suppose a various value in the blood of Christ, or uncertainty in the power of His resurrection. There is no difference as to sin in one sense, all being equally dead in trespasses and sins. So there is no such thing as one saint being brought nearer to God by redemption than another; it denies the work of Christ. All believers now are equally, i.e., perfectly, made nigh as to standing, though bad teaching does

much to darken the truth, and lack of spirituality hinders holy enjoyment, even where the truth may have entered. Besides, we are made one with Christ, but for this the gift of the Spirit was requisite.

Where Christ is before us, there is nothing we may not be able to do through Him that strengthens us.

Chapter 15

The Person of Christ

Stability is in the person of Christ, first, for eternal life, and also for the ways of God on earth. If the church was spued out of His mouth, He was the faithful witness, the beginning of the creation of God. This is the theme of John. For Paul, the church belonged to heaven, though built for God's habitation in the spirit on earth. John had neither Peter's place nor Paul's, but was linked with the one, and carried on the testimony among the gentiles where the other had been a master-builder.

Chapter 16

Christ the Wisdom of God

The wisdom of God is a wonderful thing. It must put things in their place, or it is not wisdom. That the cross does. We are sinners. We must come as such. All then is changed. Yet all is manifested, what sin is and what holiness, what hatred and what love, what man, what God, what the world and its prince; but this by the by. We come as sinners, and love meets us there. So Christ always drew out what people were, and met them divinely. For surely here is wisdom too. Christ in life and in death is God suiting Himself to man and drawing man to Himself.

Now, philosophy assumed the competency of man, and to make even God the subject matter of its judgment and thoughts. This was necessarily false. It either left God out, and all was clearly wrong; or it brought God in, and it was worse, because God and man were both out of their place. They are in it at the cross. But there, further, the saint becomes nothing, and God—Christ—all. This is just right and the very fullness of blessing—to have done with self and have the fullness of God to dwell in and enjoy. And here is the daily process. It is done completely in principle at the cross; it is wrought out practically by all the discipline of God. But then, when we have got this place of nothingness of self, there is divine wisdom unfolded to us.

All things were made by Christ and for Christ. All things are to be gathered together in one in Him, and to be reconciled all to the eternal fullness of God—all that is in heaven or on earth. The result is purposed before the foundation of the world; but in the world, in the creature, responsibility has come in. We are guilty and all is defiled.

But it was all ordained before the world to our glory. Christ has perfectly glorified God morally, and brought out what He is as nothing else could have done. Redemption and grace have a glory, and that through perfect separation from evil, and perfect obedience of man in the midst of evil, which is all its own. As it is done for us we have a part in the glory which belongs to it—the glory of God; we are the firstfruits of it, the inner circle round the blessed and glorious center in which God is displayed, even Christ. Then all things will be gathered round as a redeemed and reconciled creation to the praise of His glory, the glorious result of the hidden wisdom ordained before the world to our glory. Jesus Christ will be displayed as the power as well as the wisdom of God.

Finally, the great center, the moral center, is the cross—redemption; where (in the weakness of the creature and the fullest effort of the power of evil, and display of evil and its present effect—death) good triumphed. Its weakness was stronger than the power of what was against it. It was really divine power, but in the weakness of the creature—at least of what was of the creature though divinely, for creature it could not be rightly called. Death was the end of the creature in itself, the birth-place of the new creation as leaving the old wholly behind. I speak of its effect; for none but a divine person could have done it. It is Christ, and He crucified, in the lowest place the creature, man, can be brought to, but Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God. Then we can have a place in the glory itself—the glory of God, because He is made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption—not power. We are brought before God, and intelligently according to what God is. We are always dependent and subject: such only is our

place as really with God, and our blessedness. To be out of that place is perfect and everlasting misery. The pretension to power is man's folly in assumed independence, which is sin. We are of God. This is our nature and actual condition in Christ Jesus, and He is of God wisdom to us and righteousness, &c., so that we glory in the Lord. Power remains in His hand. We may and shall be instruments of it hereafter, and spiritually may be vessels of it now, as emptied of self.

The great point is the place wisdom has, subjection and nothingness, beginning with the cross for the sinner, which is deliverance, Christ being all. We know perfect love. We know the counsels and purpose of God; we have Christ's mind; but we are as soldiers in an army who do not know the bearing of each act in carrying out the plan in presence of the enemy. Marching right and left is all they have to do, and perfect wisdom is in each step of obedience, and inward wisdom in restoration. For each of us is thus in his place with God, and in motive; for it is love to the commander and confidence in him, as well as obedience. All thus becomes right.

The cross is the end of flesh and of the world—death to the one, the deepest possible shame and ignominy to the other. Flesh is wholly set aside, and now folly is written on its wisdom. No flesh is to glory in His presence. He that glories is to glory in the Lord. Flesh cannot glory before Him. We are to glory in Him. But then the whole being of man in the flesh, morally speaking, has ceased for the Christian. Of Him (God) are ye in Christ Jesus. And Christ Jesus is made to us wisdom from God (for this is the main subject here), and then righteousness, sanctification, and final deliverance or redemption. We glory thus in Him.

This gives a peculiar place to men, which does not hold with angels. Man—the old thing—is entirely done away with, not restored or remedied and set up again. God is substituted for it: often we see the Second man, Christ, taking the place of the first; but here God Himself and what is of Him. We are of God in Christ Jesus; and Christ of God is made unto us wisdom, &c. What is in contrast with flesh is not another kind of man, but what is of God Himself: so all that constitutes our position and the power of it. Angels have been kept in their first estate: man lost his as did the fallen angels. But as to man this is wholly set aside: death comes in Christ, and it is ended. And what takes its place? “We are of God,” and all our title and place is in Christ who of God is for us all we are before God.

The whole thing is new. (Chap. 2) There is a purpose of God for our glory, a purpose before the world. The highest in this world knew nothing of it; if they had, they would not have crucified the head of it. This is revealed to us by the Spirit. Man's heart has not conceived it; but God's heart has revealed it, and this is the Spirit the apostle had, as we too have in our place. Then the same Spirit gave the words which were the medium of communication; and the same Spirit enables us to receive it. No one can instruct the Lord; but we have the mind (νοῦν) of Christ, in whom all this wisdom is.

So it is a wholly new sphere and form of wisdom which is in this purpose of God, the hidden wisdom, before this world of responsibility, and failure, and sorrow. But note: it was the princes of this world not knowing it, which, as to means, brought about that on which its accomplishment is founded, the cross.

Observe too that a positive fresh revelation is in question, not anything discoverable by man's mind. A man's spirit, and none else, knows what is in him. God's Spirit, and none else, knows what

is in His mind, even this purpose which was before man or the world existed. And it is revealed and communicated, not by man's wisdom, or in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches.

Chapter 17

The Clergy: Is It of God? Part 1

That God has appointed or given a ministry in His Church, for its edification and for the evangelizing of the world, is as certain as the word of God can make it. The question does not lie there, but in this: Is the clergy that ministry? Mr. I. [a colonial clergyman] would permit irregular ministrations. He is very kind, no doubt, if God sent them. But there is another question: Is not his own position the false and irregular one, and a hindrance and denial of true ministry If there be a ministry given of God, and man has set up another, it is this which is in fault, this that is false, evil, worse than irregular. I will make what I mean very plain. If the Apostle Paul were to come to Quebec, he could not preach, according to Mr. I.'s system. He has never been ordained. It will be said, This is ridiculous; he is an apostle, and would preach of course. I agree—sovereignly ridiculous; but the ridiculousness is in those who have concocted a system which leads to such a result. Paul would preach assuredly (and no thanks to Mr. I. or his clerical system), because God sent him. And so would every one sent of God. The irregularity, according to the word of God, is in the clergy, not in the preaching of those whom God has sent.

I will put another case, one which Mr. I. knows to be quite common (alas! the most common): an unconverted clergyman in a parish, and the parish spiritually in the dark; or, if the clergyman be converted, a determined Puseyite, teaching to worship the Eucharist, as hundreds do now in England. Well! an evangelist sent of God is blessed to the conversion of many souls: that is, the Holy Ghost has wrought by him, and souls are brought to Christ. Which is irregular—I appeal to Mr. I.'s conscience—the evangelist who has wrought with God, or the unconverted clergyman? Who brought the latter there? Not God: it were a heinous blasphemy to say so. Who brought the evangelist there? God's grace; but this on Mr. I.'s system is irregular. Well, in this world it is so. But it is a mercy there is such. But perhaps Mr. I. will say, Let him keep to his place as evangelist, and put these converted souls under the existing orderly pastoral care. What pastoral care? That of an unconverted man? or a worshipper of the Eucharist? or a rationalist? aye, or even a man who, if he is honest, believes he was made a child of God and a member of Christ by his baptism? is this regular? What is the real state of the case according to the system (imperfectly carried out perhaps in a colony, because they cannot help themselves, and are happily more irregular)? The country is divided into parishes; and universities and other schools supply incumbents, without the smallest or most distant reference to the Church of God, or gift fitting on God's part for the office. If they are good men, so much the better—if, indeed, it do not help on delusion. But, good or bad, the ordaining prelate gives, if they are priested, the Holy Ghost to all alike, in order that they may have power to forgive sins. Is this what Mr. I. calls regular, and the free action of the Spirit of God according to the word irregular ministry?

A sober, godly mind, a mind taught by the word, let me tell him, will count such a system worse than irregular. He may—ought—to mourn and weep over it, not expose it, save as the growing power of evil forces us to inquire what can be trusted in as true, and what cannot. This feeling alone makes me speak thus. An Edomite— “down with it, down with it” —I have no sympathy with whatever. But we are forced (and, as an occasion, forced by such statements as Mr. I.'s) to inquire

what is of God and what is not—to separate the precious from the vile.

I would receive every saint, episcopal or anything else, with my whole heart; but the system is leading souls by thousands into popery and falsehood on one hand, and infidelity on the other, because there is no plain, solid truth in it. Evangelicals do not believe what they sign and acquiesce in. Can Mr. I. be surprised if I doubt that he believes the bishop conferred the Holy Ghost on him that he might have the priestly power of forgiving sins? And it is a serious thing to trifle and make empty forms of serious things—a serious thing for the state of the soul. The state of things is forcing all this into view. It may be so best in God's wisdom, for all is surely hastening to the end; but, at any rate, it is sorrowful. Whether it be wise in Mr. I. to draw attention to it, he must judge. I should have a great deal more to say on this head, but I refrain. The great principles are what we have to inquire into.

I turn to more general points; and I will state some general principles—I am bold to say, incontrovertible according to the word of God. Mr. I. will see it is not against his system more than another, but that I speak of what the word of God teaches.

Member of a church is a thing unknown to scripture. The words, the thing, the idea, are unknown there. Christians are members of Christ, and, if you please, one of another, and of nothing else; and membership of anything else is only schism, and denying the true meaning of the word.

A flock, other than God's flock, is equally unknown. God's flock alone is known in scripture, of which Christ is the Chief Shepherd. There is one flock, and only one, meeting it may be in different localities, and elders belonging to those localities, but all the faithful there at any time were of it, because they were of God's flock. A pastor and his flock, in the modern sense, is wholly unknown to scripture, and an utter denial of its contents, if it be not of the words: “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos,” &c. These statements I leave for every honest-minded saint, to see whether they are according to scripture or not.

I will now take up the proofs by which Mr. I. attempts to justify the ecclesiastical forms of his system. I only press the fact, that these forms say nothing as to the substance of the system—namely, sacramental birth to God, priestly forgiveness of sins, pretending to confer the Holy Ghost by ordination in order to that power. Anglicans must accept this; they must pretend to do it, at any rate; they all sanction it. It is important to keep this clearly before us. A man may prove meat to be good; but if poison is in it, the proof of its goodness means nothing, or a snare.

But I will take up the alleged proofs of the forms, and show what scripture teaches as to the ministry. In doing this, I must apprize my reader that there is a constant confusion in most minds between ministry and local office. I do not reproach Mr. I. in particular with this. I remember when, from habit, I made the same confusion. But, for all that, the difference is important. Nay, my own conviction is, that the gradual decline of gift led to the confusion of the two, ministry and office, and, thus establishing the clergy, led the way for papal anti-Christian claims. The elders and deacons were local officers; ministry, in the sense of the exercise of gift for edification, was not. It was a given member (eye, foot, ear, as is said) of the whole body of Christ. Elders were ordained in every city; but God set in the Church various gifts. This difference is all important as to the nature of ministry, and the whole clerical and denominational system crumbles together under the unquestionable scriptural fact.

Let me add a question here, which I have often and long ago put, as showing the practical result—If Paul were to address a letter to the Church of God which is at Montreal, who could get the letter It was necessary for me to begin with this distinction, because Mr. I.'s first question involves the denial of it. His question shows, indeed, ignorance of what he might see all over Canada and Europe, and everywhere else. It is this: Has God ordained a divinely appointed ministry to rule and teach in the Church? Now, it is perfectly clear that scripture recognizes teachers who do not rule, save as far as general influence goes, and rulers who do not teach. That teaching was a desirable qualification for those who ruled, but that all had it not. The, whole Presbyterian body, whatever their other defects may be, recognize ruling elders who are not teachers. But, further, Mr. I. having his mind filled with the identity of ruling and teaching, supposes that the admission of a divinely given ministry is rested, by those whom he opposes, on 1 Timothy, and that they think that 2 Timothy has set it aside. He deceives himself and his hearers altogether. It is because we believe in a divinely given ministry, that we do not believe in the geographical system of parishes, and a ministry ordained of man and not of God. Some clergymen may be ministers; but a divinely given ministry sets aside the clerical system, in which Paul and all the early laborers of scripture could not have been permitted to exercise their ministry.

I shall quote the passages which speak of a divinely appointed ministry, quite distinct from local elders, that we may know how scripture presents the ministry to us. In Eph. 4, which Mr. I. quotes, when condescending to sanction what he calls “irregular laborers,” we shall see what ministry is. Christ, who descended into the lowest parts of the earth, is ascended above all heavens, and has led captivity captive, and received gifts for men—a glorious origin and source of ministry. “And he gave some apostles and prophets; some pastors and teachers, and some evangelists, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ, till we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” We cannot conceive a more full or glorious expression of ministry than this, complete in every possible respect, in its source, in the sphere it belongs to, in the completeness of its objects, and in the enduringness of its character. And note, we have no miraculous gifts, no tongues, no healings, no miracles. It is proper ministerial service. The apostles and prophets, we read in this Epistle, were the foundation; they have had their place, but pastors, teachers, evangelists abide. Nor is there an idea of ordination: Christ “gave.” They are, Mr. I. being witness, the irregular laborers, though Timothy, he tells us, proves there were regular ones.

And note, these are the talents conferred when the nobleman went away to receive the kingdom and to return; and woe be to that servant who, in order to trade, waited for any other authority than the possession of the talents committed! And it is very striking here that so distinct is the character of gift by an exalted Christ that the apostle knows nothing here of the apostles till Christ was gone on high. He recognized of course, as we know, the fact; but he cannot know them other than endowed from on high, as he did not, in the same sense, know Christ after flesh. But this is certain: we get the regular ministry in the Church (pastors and teachers) to the world (evangelists), by gift from on high, without the most distinct hint of bishop, presbyter, or ordination. It speaks, Mr. I. does not deny, of the irregular laborers on his system. I should say a divinely appointed ministry in its fullest character, and without any so-called merely supernatural or miraculous gifts, but that by which the Church was to be edified till we all come to a perfect man. I somewhat pity the regular

ministry if this was the irregular.

But let us search if scripture warrants this view elsewhere. We have a more general list in 1 Cor. 12. Here the Spirit divides to every man severally as he will, and the gifts are given to every man to profit withal. These are various members in the one body. God has set in the Church—the sphere of action is the one body, the Church—apostles, prophets, &c., amongst which we have gifts of government distinct from teachers. Some of these gifts are lost, others not; but I suppose what remain are to be used. Yea, I might almost dare to say, It is not irregular to use them, to trade with the talents, if they are given to profit withal. Scripture will surely, and does, regulate their use, both as to order and morally. Not more than two or three were to speak—that is a wise rule of order; “Be not many teachers” —a moral instruction and warning. But neither could have any application at all in the clerical system. They could have had no application to the system Mr. I. belongs to. We are not talking of what are called extraordinary or miraculous gifts, but of teachers, of divinely appointed ministry. Or does Mr. I. intend to tell us that the Holy Ghost is no longer in the Church to give teachers, but to make priests for the forgiveness of sins? Is that what he considers regular?

But I proceed. We have in Peter positive orders on the point. (1 Peter 4:10.) As every man has received the gift, so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Here again it is the irregular labor, but within, “one to another.”

Evangelical history tells the same tale, as Mr. I. admits. “They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.” And “the hand of the Lord was with them.” Philip, one of the seven, purchases to himself a good degree, and an evangelist, Stephen, has a still brighter crown—at least as far as man can say, and so in numberless instances. It is the history of the evangelizing the Gentiles. Paul boasts that he was neither of men nor by man. John in his second epistle has no rule for a woman to go by, but the doctrine brought. Gains and Demetrius are commended for receiving these irregular laborers. Diotrephes, indeed, objected. Such are the instructions, rapidly reviewed, which the word gives us of divinely appointed ministry. We may add Rom. 12, in which each is directed to confine himself to his own gift.

I now turn to Timothy. This does give us order and care of the Church, and watching over sound doctrine; which last was the immediate object of his being left at Ephesus. But it does not give us anything of appointment of ministry. Indeed though scripture may and does regulate the use of gift, if God has given a teacher or other gift, he cannot, he dare not, wait on man to exercise it, and hide it in a napkin till then. Scripture does regulate; and where prophets were to speak, the rest were to judge. But the gift of God is to be exercised and not await the permission of man, as to the general fact of serving by it, though all of us have to be subject one to another, and we are to obey God rather than man, if man forbid us to speak in Christ's name. Timothy was left specially to watch over sound doctrine, and watch against false teachers; but the general order of the Church is unfolded. But there is no establishment of a ministry. He was to communicate to faithful men the things he had learned; but here there is not the remotest hint of appointing to office, and its absence is most significative. He was to instruct, not ordain. No such thought was or could be true.

We have seen that the ministry was in full exercise and its order established in 1 Corinthians. It depended on gift, and gift had its place in the whole body. If Apollos was a teacher at Ephesus, he was a teacher at Corinth, and so of all. Indeed every Jew was familiar with this, and the rulers of the synagogue, as to office, were distinct from the teachers. Christ could stand up to read and

teach, so Paul and Barnabas were invited at Antioch.

As to the form, there was thus a well-known liberty of teaching, and the distinction of teaching and ruling was thoroughly understood. They might, doubtless, be united in one person, but they were distinct. It was the habit of our blessed Lord, of Paul, and of Apollos to teach and preach in the synagogue, none of these pretending to be ruler there. And, in the Christian assemblies, elders were local. Thus Paul and Barnabas chose elders for them in every church. Acts 14. So, Titus was to establish elders in every city. Gifts were exercised everywhere, as such or such a member of the body: so the whole history and doctrinal teaching of the New Testament show. Elders were local officers. For this office it was desirable that they should be apt to teach; but their business was to oversee and guide the flock of God where the Holy Ghost had made them overseers. And we know that some recognized elders did not teach, though they might rule well. The apostle in this same epistle distinguished those among them who labor in word and doctrine. (1 Tim. 5:17.)

But, so far from ordaining teachers, or the elders alone being the regular teachers, there is in the epistles a prohibition which makes such a notion ridiculous: “Let your women keep silence in your churches;” “For I suffer not a woman to teach.” Can any one in his senses conceive such a phrase, where the only orderly teaching was in the hands of elders? But it is certain that in the synagogue and in the early churches all who could teach to profit were to teach. Elders there were. It was desirable that elders should he apt to teach; but of their being the teachers there is not a hint, but exactly the contrary. Women were not to teach; all men who could were free to do it according to their gift, and bound, too, so to minister the same as good stewards. No honest man can doubt it if he takes the word of God. In France, Switzerland, Germany, it is not now denied by those who have considered the subject. It was considered a whole day at the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance at Berlin. Do not suppose I mean that they act, or mean to act on it. This is a very different thing. One German professor after an evening's discussion with a third person said to me: It is impossible that any upright Christian can deny it is so in scripture; but think of the folly of acting on it after 1800 years!

But Mr. I. appeals to the word. Let him produce the appointment of any one to preach by ecclesiastical authority. Timothy is directed to communicate the truths he has learned to faithful men able to teach; but to ordain teachers, never, neither he nor any one else.

Having gone through the teaching of scripture, let us, now see what Mr. I. has to say. He will already have perceived that I believe in a divinely-appointed ministry, and, because I do, I do not own his office—his system—which denies wholly that of scripture. He will have seen that it is not from 1 Timothy I draw the proof of such a ministry (for there is nothing about it, but about the order of the house of God, in which the ministry of all is supposed possible to the exclusion of women, aptness to teach being desirable in an elder). All the New Testament shows there was such a divinely given ministry. 1 Timothy gives the order of the Church.

It is not even said that hands were laid on elders. I dare say they were, as it was the common expression of commending to God, and communication of blessing or curse; but it is not said. Such has been the wisdom of God. He knew what was before the Church in the way of clergy. We have how Timothy was to behave himself in the house of God, to have it in order. As to elders, deacons, widows, &c., 2 Timothy altered no principle as to ministry, as 1 Timothy established none; it gives individual guidance in the last days and perilous times when the Church should be in

disorder.

Mr. I., I cannot help saying, shows much ignorance on scripture questions, and even as to what he is attacking. He takes Bishop Lloyd's chronology for gospel as to the date of the two epistles to Timothy, and even founds on it his argument as to the difference he supposes we make between the two. I do not pretend to decide any question in so intricate a matter as chronology, still less so vexed a question as that of the two Timothys. Some have thought the second the earlier—I cannot conceive why, I confess. At any rate it involves the question of Paul's release from captivity on which volumes have been written. He speaks in 2 Timothy of events which it is impossible to find in the history of the Acts (hence they are to be supposed to have happened after the end of that history). Thus he had left Trophimus sick at Miletus; but when last at Jerusalem Trophimus was there, and he did not touch at Miletus on his way to Rome. On the other hand, in Acts 20 at Miletus he did not expect to see their face again. However now (in 2 Timothy) he saw his end to be close. In Philippians he expects to get free from his first captivity, and in Philemon tells him to prepare a lodging. It would rather seem that 2 Timothy is the very latest of all his epistles. If so, it is at least four years later than the first; for we have four years of imprisonment in the Acts, perhaps eight or ten or more later, unless the first was written after getting free from his first imprisonment, which is full of difficulty if we take Acts 20 as a divinely given presentiment; but this is partly met by the direction to Philemon to prepare a lodging. These questions I do not pretend to solve here.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 18

The Clergy: Is It of God? Part 2

On the face of the epistles one gives us the order of God's house, the other tells of departure and perilous times. All the beloved ones of Asia, whose order he had established, bad turned away from him; and while insisting more than ever on Christian courage, grief comes out in every passage. The scriptures, and immediate apostolic teaching, are the resource when the power of godliness was gone and its form there; and the house, once set as the pillar and ground of the truth, had become as a great house full of vessels to dishonor from which a man had to purge himself, as well as of honor. Nor has Mr. I. paid attention to the directions of this last epistle touching the last and perilous days. To this I beg his attention, and that of every one who may deign to read these pages. The Second Epistle to Timothy states, that in the last days perilous times shall come, which it describes, when there would be a form of godliness denying the power of it. 2 Timothy does not contemplate the godly order of the first epistle, but a state of things in the professing church analogous to the state of the heathen as described in the Epistle to the Romans. And it does direct us to have done with it— “From such turn away.”

It is not a question of breaking up the Church. Alas! what Mr. I. calls the Church is breaking up by its own decrepitude, by the contradictory principles it contains within itself, and the absence of all power of self-government, and leaving us exposed to, or rather dragging us unto, the deadly evil of popery and infidelity, so that we have to inquire where the resource of the individual is when he has to turn away. In 2 Timothy that resource is declared to be in the scriptures, not in the professing church, and not in the clergy. If Mr. I. cannot find out the difference between the directions for godly order in 1 Timothy and the directions to individuals when false profession has brought in perilous times in 2 Timothy, his position must have singularly blinded his eyes.

Nor is this all. In chapter 2 we have a totally changed state of the Church contemplated. In the beginning of the Acts we read— “The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.” To that one well known assembly at Jerusalem, where the whole Church then was, souls were added. In 2 Timothy how different the language! False doctrines are overthrowing the faith of some; but the sure foundation of God abides. There is this comfort— “The Lord knoweth them that are his.” They may not be brought out into the blessed unity of a manifested assembly as at the first; they may be hidden in the recesses of Rome, or in the dark ignorance of Greece; but the Lord knows them, and that is a comfort.

But there is a direction addressed to our responsibility also— “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” If a godly man thinks it iniquity to say that a person has received the Holy Ghost, perhaps from an unconverted man, so as to have the power of forgiving sins, and such like; if his conscience tells him it is iniquity to establish crowds of unconverted men, who hate the gospel, as ministers of God in parishes, what is he to do? Mr. I. may call it breaking up the Church, but the word of God commands him to depart from iniquity.

But while this is a direction for individual conscience of the plainest kind, the passage in 2 Timothy goes farther. The apostle gives what I may call ecclesiastical teaching. When the Church becomes

a great house, we must expect this evil. In a great house there are all kinds of vessels, and some to dishonor too. What is to be done? The great house is Christendom. No one thinks of leaving this. We turn neither heathens nor Jews nor Mohammedans, nor renounce Christian profession; but we are called to purge ourselves from the vessels to dishonor who are in this Christendom. Mr. I. may object to this, and call it breaking up the Church; but the word of God directs us to purge ourselves from these, and we must follow it. But if Mr. I. cannot see the difference between this and the beautiful order of God's house, as depicted in 1 Tim. I repeat, his position must have sadly blinded his eyes.

A divinely appointed ministry is then not only admitted but insisted on, in contrast with the apostate and anti-Christian principle of a clergy (which calls the blessed action of the Holy Ghost, and what is admitted to be such, irregular, and puts a human establishment in its place). 1 Timothy does not speak of the appointment of ministry, nor does 2 Timothy take it away. A divinely appointed ministry subsists to this day. 1 Timothy shows the order of the house of God; 2 Timothy tells us what to do in the perilous times of the last days, when we have to say, “The Lord knoweth them that are his.” There was order in 1 Timothy. There is disorder everywhere now.

The clergy means that the title to ministry depends, not on gifts and teaching the truth, but on human establishment, in the immensely vast majority, of unconverted men by unconverted men. The Romish priest, or Greek pope, is a clergyman; so is Mr. I. who is bound to own an ordained man who teaches the contrary of what Paul taught, as a brother minister. Why? Because he is a clergyman. But he cannot own the one sent of God as a brother minister, because he is not a clergyman. He may condescend to own from on high the Holy Ghost's irregular laborers. Let him not be offended by my referring to Romish priests as clergymen. So far does this principle of clergy go, that if a Romish priest came over to the Anglican body to-morrow, he is owned as in holy orders, and a fellow clergyman. If the greatest instrument God had in the world—who was not a clergyman—were to come, he could not be owned. It is this horrible wickedness that I reject, and from which I withdraw—the principle of clergy. And I do so just because I believe in a divinely appointed ministry. I know there are good men among the clergy, and I love them; but the system is a denial of the Holy Ghost and His work, and a substitution of man in His place. Nor did I ever see one who was a good man, who has not suffered in his soul by being of the clergy, by falsifying his conscience in solemn things.

A few words will suffice for Mr. I,'s select passages. He tells us Christ ordained twelve apostles. No doubt. What Christ ordained, we own, of course. Yet even this, most assuredly, was not the Christian commission nor the Church of God. When they were sent out, they were forbidden to go to the Gentiles, or to any but Jews; they would not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man was come. Is this what Mr. I. presents to us as ministry in the Church? It was after Christ's death and resurrection that they received their commission for the world, and were then told to tarry at Jerusalem till endowed with power from on high. It is in this character accordingly Paul owns them as apostles—in their church character. He ascended up on high and gave gifts unto men, and he gave some apostles, &c. But it is natural for those imbued with the idea of clergy to overlook all the doctrine of the Holy Ghost.

As to the seventy being deacons, it is a new notion, if I am not mistaken, not very long got up, and absurd as it is new; or if indeed not new, an old absurdity. The seven are not called deacons, but

Mr. I. cannot reject their being So, for the Anglican service for the ordination of deacons, treats them as such, and they are generally so accounted. They were to serve tables, as contrasted with the word, as every one knows; they were the ministering servants of the Church. The seventy were sent before. Christ's face, wherever He was coming, as a last warning to Israel, on Christ's last journey up to Jerusalem, to warn their cities that the kingdom of God was come unto them, the devils being subject to them as a testimony. (Luke 10:9, 11, 17.) No one, I conceive, but a clergyman, could have dreamed of connecting this with deacons The next proof is that the apostles ordained a successor to Judas. This is an unfortunate example. Peter takes up Psa. 109 to show that the word of God expressly taught that another was to take his office; of ordination there is nothing. “Ordained” is an interpolation—with what good faith others must judge. All that is said is, “must be a witness.” They, the 120, it would appear (for no others are spoken of in the plural), set forth two as answering Peter's description, and then they cast lots which it is to be, after the Jewish manner, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, and he was numbered with the twelve. The choice was given to the Lord by lot, and there was no ordination of any kind, nothing regular. Deacons are set apart, if so we are to call them, to serve tables that others might give themselves up to the ministry of the word. Was this setting apart to rule and teach—ordaining to serve that others might have full time for teaching? It is the only express case of laying on of hands for office we have in the New Testament. True, some of them who had gift became “irregular laborers,” but no wit, even of a clergyman, can make out of it an ordination to rule and to teach. We read that they who use that office of service well would acquire a good degree and great boldness in Christ Jesus—would be efficient irregular laborers, as Philip and Stephen were in Jerusalem and Samaria, and in the desert of Gaza, according to the power of the Spirit of God.

In Acts 14 Paul and Barnabas chose elders (“ordained” is really a false translation) and rulers in a true scriptural sense; but of teaching there is no question. There is no doubt that the apostle appointed several elders as overseers or bishops, by the authority of the Holy Ghost, in churches which he founded. I say by the authority of the Holy Ghost, because in Acts 20 Paul says of the elders of Ephesus “The Holy Ghost has made you bishops.” They were to shepherd the flock of God (feed is a different word). It is ruipaive, not pdarce, Yet it was desirable they should be apt to teach; and, in such case, doubtless did so. But we also know, by the same apostle, that some did not.

As to Timothy's being the first bishop of Ephesus, it is a mere fable. Every one who has inquired into these things knows that the superscriptions of the epistles have no authority whatever. Some, as on the face of it 1 Corinthians, are notoriously false. All of them were sentences tacked on by late copyists. But Acts 20 is a clear proof that Timothy was not so; for the apostle calls for the elders of Ephesus on his last voyage; and there is not the smallest hint of any Timothy, or any other bishop. On the contrary, language is used which excludes such an idea. “Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you bishops;” and then he commends them to God, and the word of His grace. It is not merely the word bishop applied to them, though it does show those whom he owned as alone made their bishops by the Holy Ghost, but he looks to them as the ones to watch for themselves and all the flock; and the fancied bishop is ignored in the most absolute and unceremonious way. No man in his senses can suppose that there was another superior functionary to whom the chief care of the flock was entrusted. Besides, Timothy, and so Titus, was called away when his special service was ended. They were employed

as confidential agents by the apostle to complete needed order in new churches, but permanent bishopric they had none. Gifted saints they were, and the apostle's own sons in the faith, in whom the apostle, as he declares, reposed especial confidence.

As regards the angel of the church, who told Mr. I. that he was the presiding officer? It is quite certain that, where all is plainly stated, there were several presiding officers or elders. The angel in the Jewish synagogue was not the presiding officer; that is well known. If the angel was the presiding officer—that is, if the original constitution of the churches had been changed—the Spirit of God would not own directly and openly any such change from His own constitution, but gives a symbolical name. And it was when the Church had left its first love, and was already threatened with having the candlestick removed; while its history is preserved till, having had opportunity to repent, it had not done so, and was threatened with the sorest judgments on one hand, and on the other was found pretending to be rich, and was just about to be spued out of Christ's mouth. I do not believe that the angel was a presiding officer, but a symbolical representative of the Church viewed in those responsible in it. For this reason, that the way the plural is used in Smyrna, Thyatira, and the interchange of it with the singular, as in chapter ii. 10, 24, so, indeed, the language to Pergamos and to Philadelphia—in truth, I might say, to all the churches—makes it impossible to apply it to an individual presiding officer, and obliges us to see a symbolical representative of the Church. This is certain that if it was a single presiding officer, the Holy Ghost would not own him as such, by any direct name of office, and it was so only when the Church had left her first love, and was now threatened with being cut off. I cannot enter into a discussion of the interpretation of the seven churches here: but the plain declarations of scripture present several bishops in a church, never one. That this crept in early, no one denies, when all sought their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. But it is certain that it was not so at first. Acts 20 demonstrates the contrary. And we have the best ecclesiastical authority, Jerome, confirmed by other so-called fathers, telling us that there was no such difference in the beginning, no such presiding officer, but that it was introduced for peace' sake, when the presbyters or elders began to seek to make separate parties for themselves. Clement, the earliest post scriptural authority we have knows only presbyters in Corinth; and if we have Ignatius, who boasts abundantly of them, we have not only interpolations, but forgeries, as has been fully proved, to make good the ambition of men. It is a sad history, but a predicted one. Paul's remedy for the very case Jerome speaks of was not Jerome's. Of that the Papal abominations have been the gradual and legitimate growth. Of this we have too many remains (in the pretension to confer the Holy Ghost in priesthood, which, as a distinct order, is the denial of Christianity, in priestly absolution, in baptismal making members of Christ, where episcopacy prevails, to say nothing of making the whole population the Church) to feel any confidence in substituting such a presiding officer for the word of God, to which Paul commends us in the perilous times of the last days, and the Holy Ghost by which alone the humble soul can rightly use it, and who alone can give a true and effectual ministry.

For my own part, then, I am so far from rejecting a divinely given ministry, that it is because I believe in one that I reject the clergy, which is not a divinely given one, but the fruit of the Church's departure from the faith. I beg Mr. I. to believe I have no enmity against him, or any godly member of the body he belongs to. I receive them as members of the body of Christ; but in these last days, these perilous times, we are forced to see where the sure foundation is. The Holy Ghost, through Paul, assures us it is in the scriptures, not in the professing body. That would come, and it has

come, to have the form of godliness and to deny the power of it. The part of the professing body he belongs to is, of all others, a scene of confusion and incompetency, which confounds beholders. Presbyterianism, with its deserted kirk and U. P.'s, and Free Kirk almost split upon the point of which they should unite with, has little to boast over it. I assure him, I say it with profound and unfeigned sorrow. The breaking up of these Protestant bodies will only let in, and is letting in, Popery and infidelity; and I have not one atom of sympathy with the worldly-minded ambitious dissenters who are joining papists and infidels in seeking to pull it down. I must leave all this in God's wise and holy hand; but saints must in such a time look for some sure foundation.

They have it, thank God, in the word of God, in the faithfulness of the true and exalted Head of the Church, soon coming to take us to Himself and set all things right in heaven and in earth (blessed time to think of!) They have the Spirit of God to guide and help them if they are humble, and provision in the word of God for the very times we are in, moral provision for godly rule and order when official has been perverted and corrupted; not, perhaps, the order of the external Church restored, but the presence and faithfulness of Him who can never fail it, an ark of God, which, if its ordered place was in the midst of the camp, can go a three days' journey in condescending grace before the host to find in the wilderness a place where we may rest.

I have done. The clergy I reject, because the system denies, in principle and fact, the title and prerogatives of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, the unity of the body, and the gifts by which Christ, its Head, edifies the Church and calls sinners, and has substituted geographical divisions for faith, or sectional membership for membership of the body of Christ—has substituted human arrangements of one kind and another for a divinely given ministry. There is no scriptural ground of any kind for church membership other than the unity of the body of Christ; none for a pastor and his flock; none for the divisions which have resulted from the attempts to rebuild the church when, three hundred years ago, excessive ecclesiastical corruption in the great professing body, led masses, under God's mercy, to break loose from its galling and degrading chains. But the energy of faith which brought about that result has passed away, and the result is fallen into decrepitude, giving occasion to the energetic recrudescence of popery and the wide spread influence of pretentious intellect, and infidelity. It is under this we are now suffering; but we are forewarned in the word.

I cannot close this without pressing on my reader's attention, though briefly, the warnings I allude to. We have the solemn declaration in Rom. 11 that if the Gentile Christendom (which has taken the place of Judaism) did not continue in God's goodness, it should be cut off. Has it so continued? Was popery continuing in God's goodness? If not, Christendom will be cut of, Laodicea spued out of God's mouth, as Thyatira punished with grievous plagues (both to give place, as you may see, to the throne and scepter of Christ, and, it is added in Thyatira, heavenly possession of the morning star). The mystery of iniquity, begun in the Apostles' days, would continue till it resulted in open apostasy, and the man of sin to be destroyed at Christ's coming. Evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse. Is there fear then for the saints? None. Not more than for the saints of Judaism, who, when it fell, were transferred into the Church of God. But their external props will fail them. They will have to walk by faith as they were ever called to do. The Lord is coming, according to His promises, to receive them to Himself, that where He is they may be also. He will gather the wheat, not into a church on earth as the remnant of Judaism, but into the heavenly garner. Meanwhile they have the word of God, and the Spirit of God—God Himself and the word of

His grace—a word able to make them wise unto salvation. Let them recognize every gift God gives, for He is yet calling sinners, or edifying His saints. These will continue in virtue of the faithfulness of Christ Himself, till all the work He has to do is done. The denial of gifts is the denial of the sovereign title of the Holy Ghost, and Christ's authority in the Church, just as the clergy is.

Appointment to office is lost, the Church on earth being in confusion and ruin. If elders are to be appointed, I ask, not only who is to appoint them with authority, and there is no one, but where is the church over which they are to be appointed? A sectional body may choose for itself (an act of mere human will), but they can have no authority beyond the will of those who have chosen them. They cannot be what elders were in the early Church—bishops, whom the Holy Ghost appointed over the flock of God. It is a mere unlicensed powerless imitation by human will over a little self-constituted corner of the Church (perhaps, indeed, of the world). But scripture has provided for this case also, not officially, but morally, not only in the gift to rule, but in faithful service. See 1 Cor. 16:15, 16; 1 Thess. 5:12, 18; Heb. 13:17. In none of these is official authority given as the ground of subjection and obedience. It is an exhortation involving the spiritual state and duty of the saints themselves, founded on moral grounds, always true and available, and which, if the sorrowful need arise for it, can be enforced by the saints themselves according to 2 Thess. 3:14 - 16, and Rom. 16:17, 18.

My object is not now to enlarge on this. I notice it only to show that the blessed Lord has provided in His word, even for the ruin in which our unfaithfulness has involved the Church. Only I beseech every saint to look the confusion and ruin which exists in the face, to see how surely we are in the perilous times of the last days, to be ready for the Lord, loins girded and lights burning, waiting for God's Son from heaven; to arise and trim their lamps, and to see what is the sure foundation of God which will abide, and thus build up according to the grace given to them, and leave to the enemies of the Lord and the selfishness of men and sects to pull down. We shall have enough to do in these days to deliver souls from abounding error, and help them in the path of grace and peace. Only may they remember, that wherever there is a priesthood (save that of all children of God), there is the denial of Christianity. A priest means one who goes to God for you—is between you and God. Christianity is the blessed truth that the veil is rent, and that, through the efficiency of the precious blood of Christ, we can go boldly into the holiest ourselves—that through Him we have ourselves access by one Spirit unto the Father. An ordained or consecrated priesthood is the denial of true Christianity.

(Concluded from page 125.)

Chapter 19

When Out of Communion With God

When we slip out of communion with God, how wretched we are, and how we contribute to the unhappiness of others! Whereas in communion with God there is power to enable us to resist the devil, to enjoy the Lord and to promote the true blessing of His people. The Lord give us to have our Lord Jesus very simply and constantly before our hearts! We shall never go wrong with him as our object; we are sure to stray where any other thing slips into his place

Chapter 20

Conscience

As regards conscience I have more than one thing to note. First, speaking (as infidels and annihilationists do) of its being the effect of education, &c., is all confusion. This confounds the intrinsic power to judge with a rule by which it judges. No one denies that it may be misled by education making such or such feelings, or an obligation. But a rule or obligation imposed (and all such rules are so) is quite different from conscience, which is the sense that there is right and wrong. Hence when called into activity by an act that such is right or wrong, it pronounces by its own judgment that this is right and that is wrong. It pronounces for itself. I may have dimmed, blinded, influenced, misled it; but conscience is the judgment I pronounce on firm, instinctive, and uninfluenced persuasion that such an act is right, such wrong. So far from its owning a law, it ceases whenever there is one which has authority, because it has not to judge for itself. It is quite true that the instinctive judgment of conscience is according to some immutable law; but this is another thing. It is not the perception of the law, but man's judgment of right and wrong in itself. It is our own knowledge of good and evil, not a rule outside us. Hence when Adam had it not—was not “become as one of us” knowing good and evil, he had a law to which obedience was to be paid, and as to an act in which there was no right and wrong in itself. He might have eaten, had it not been forbidden. Man acquired this judgment of right and wrong: of this there was no trace before. It was a question of obedience, law, and authority—of subjection to God; but he enjoyed the blessings of goodness—had to be grateful, but had no question of there being a right and a wrong perceived by himself—no power of it, no occasion for it, no possibility of it. It would have falsified his whole position. He would have ceased to be innocent. Indeed the thing was impossible; for he was not as God, holy (i.e. essentially abhorring perfectly known evil—known because of and by being holy); and sin was not in him. He could not innocently have known evil to judge it. When a law was given, it might no doubt condemn what conscience did; but conscience had no more to do. If God gave a law, man had only to obey. Again, education may corrupt the judgment as to what is right and wrong, but supposes the judging faculty. I suspect that the true test is that, whenever the conscience is falsified by education, the will and passions will be found to be at work, and, though the person may not think of it, could not be denied by a person not having his passions engaged. It is conventional right and wrong formed by circumstances.

Hence as in mere civil circumstances, convenience is the ultimate rule. We have Pascal's diet um— “juste, c'est ce qui est etabli; done tout ce qui est etabli est juste.” Only when this violates too seriously the conscience or natural sense of right and wrong, it tends to revolution—that is, will break out against the pressure. I suspect the immutable law, of right and wrong is founded on relationships, whether with God or as God has formed them. From these duties flow. Only that man having been set lord over the earth, possession has come in also. It is regulated by convention: only if it violates too much the right in others (in many) to possess, it tends to violence in order to possess, wants ministering to this.

Grace has brought us out of law into absolute obedience to a person; but then it has its own rules which we need, and has set up the absolute authority of a person and a relationship which

governs conduct (i.e. right and wrong), as all relationships do, Christ being the perfect model of that in which we are with God and man. But we must not confound the rule of right and wrong with conscience or the discernment of right and wrong. “To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” That rule varies divinely, even because our relationship is changed. My duty was a man's, a child of Adam's, to God and to other children of Adam; for that was my place and relationship. It is of a child, a son of God, of which Christ is the pattern. Hence our rule or test of right and wrong is universality (practically what I hold to be right for all everywhere), but modified by this principle—when the same relation exists (i.e., one formed by God), creature, son, daughter, wife, &c., man with God and with men, general or specific, whatever He has ordered. Only we must distinguish between obedience to God (or what represents Him) and conscience viewed as judging right and wrong. It is right to obey Him, wrong to disobey; and so far conscience comes in; for man had a given—has an instinctive—recognition of God; but it is not any judgment of right and wrong as such in the act itself. It is not what man acquired by the fall, i.e., the divine prerogative of judging right and wrong for himself— “one of us.”

The question may arise, how far grounds of judgment, and so far reason, enter into conscience; and I answer, Not at all. They go to lead to the estimate of the fact of the relationship, 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. But conscience judges the thing. Conscience is at work: I call it wrong.

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. First, there is the sense of responsibility to a being above us, principally to God—not the duty of loving Him (that is law), but authority. This Adam had before the fall. Secondly, there is the sense of good and evil (which is properly conscience). Thirdly, there is self-judgment or repulsion of heart as to others produced by it when an act is contemplated it condemns.

Chapter 21

Correspondence

WILL your correspondent, “C. E. S.,” kindly state his authority, if any, for saying “Some inspired communications (written by the Spirit of God) have perished?” — “Thoughts on Canticles,” Bible Treasury, March, 1869, p. 225.

Have we any divine proof that the 1005 songs by Solomon, and his works on natural history, ever belonged to the canon of Scripture? Were they more than the sayings of the wise man? Yours, &c., NESCITUR.

To the Editor of the BIBLE TREASURY.

Apart from the questions of “Old Testament Canon,” and the perpetual miracle in order to preserve the scriptures, there will many grave questions arise if it be allowed that ONE divinely written communication has perished.

Chapter 22

Correspondence: Difference Between Members of the Body and the Church

To the editor of the “Bible Treasury.”

Sir—at all times, but very specially in this day of abounding error, it does indeed seem of first-rate importance to cleave to the written word, looking for the spirit's guidance therein as the only and all sufficient rule of faith and practice. You, sir, I am sure, will not dispute this—you have often pressed it upon your readers. Though deeply respecting those whom God has given to be pastors and teachers in the church, I dare not receive any proposition on their authority merely—in principle that would be popery, and would neither be faith in God nor in his word. In that word I read “the church, which is his body.” (Eph. 1) I read moreover of “churches of the saints,” “churches of Galatia,” “the church of God which is at Corinth,” and so on; and I feel no difficulty about these things. Clearly, in principle and before error and division came in, all believers in a given place would meet together as God's assembly in that place. I read too of “the church in thy house.” it is perfectly plain the church existed before and quite independently of any meeting of the church. Some members of the” one body” assembled together to worship God, but their assembling did not make them to be members of “the church, which is his body:” they were such before. And most cordially do I agree with you (p. 252 of your “new testament doctrine of the spirit"), that all the members of Christ are responsible to “abandon everything that falsifies their relationship in conduct, position, and objects;” and that “they ought to assemble and walk together according to the word of God, the Holy Ghost being allowed his own place of sovereign action for the glory of the Lord Jesus.” but where, I do most earnestly ask, do you find any scriptural warrant for the (to me, startling) assertion, that as to the church “here below,” as you say, “it is not the simple fact of being members of Christ's body that constitutes the church"? Where does the new testament say anything of the kind? You have certainly given no proof from God's word; if you can give it me in your periodical, I shall be truly oblige to you. Oh! How often am I reminded “the Lord seeth not as man seeth.” he does bless those seek him, though amidst much of error and mistake, it may be. Let the “two or three,” or more, by all means meet in what they believe to be “the more excellent way,” as plainly indicated in the word of God; but let them not unchurch their brethren, but rather seek to win them by love to a fuller and more practical realization of their privileges, instead of stumbling them by saying hard things, which cannot affect their consciences, when no proof is given from God's word. What the difference in your mind is between “his church” and the “church of God,” I must leave you to determine. (p. 252.)—whether I say, God's book, or the book of God, appears to me precisely the same thing

Yours, Sir, very sincerely,

- Anxious.

[“ Anxious” is disturbed and perplexed without the least reason. Membership of Christ is said of the Christian individually; the church or assembly supposes the corporate relation of all who are

baptized by the Holy Ghost into one body. All Christians are members of that one body, but they are not on Church ground, they do not meet ■ν ■κκλησ■■ (1 Cor. 14) in the sense in which scripture speaks, unless they are gathered to the Lord's name, which implies now the free action of the Spirit for Christ's glory and according to His word. To say that because they meet as Wesleyans or Independents, they come together ■ν ■κκλησ■■ is mere sophistry, which aims at obliterating the landmarks of God's word under cover of upholding it. This may influence souls, the self-willed assuredly, and perhaps the weak. It is a work worthy of disappointed spirits, whose ambition enormously exceeds their power. Alas! the hand that could not build a hovel might destroy a palace. The objection of “Anxious” seems to me either ignorance or a denial of the Church.

“God's assembly” is true of those assembling truly on that ground, even if but a few; “"the assembly of God” is strictly true only of all Christians so assembled. Even the comparison fails for strictly “"the book of God” means the whole of it; whereas a part of it, if not the whole, might be justly characterized as “God's book.” Undoubtedly scripture contemplates all the members of Christ meeting ■ω ■κκλησ■■, and nothing else; but it does provide even for two or three so gathered, and in no way imprints such a stamp on ever so many saints otherwise met and guided. If a large family break up in disorder and sin, and two or three return to the family board they ought never to have left, do they or do they not hold the family character? do not those who turn their backs lose it, whatever they may be individually? It is idle and worse to call this unchurching our brethren, or saying hard things; it is really to unchurch their systems, and to say the truth in love to themselves.—ED. B. T]

Chapter 23

Corruption

When corruption governs a thing which God made for blessing, he rejects it; or replaces it by introducing something better. Those who would perpetuate or continue that which is spoiled rest under the effects of an evil which they count licensed by the word of God

Chapter 24

The Cross of Christ

The cross is the place where all that was against us, our transgressions and iniquities—in fact, the things done, and the nature which did them—were laid upon Christ: “our old man is crucified with him.” He bore the full judgment of God on their account in His sufferings on the cross. He carried them all down to death, under the wrath which He endured, that He might leave them in the place of ashes, having made atonement by the shedding of His own blood. God has there put an end to man in the flesh, to sin and sins, by the judicial death of Christ as our substitute; and Christ, having brought these things under the eye and hand of God to be thus dealt with, has forever put them away from before God, and from us, by the sacrifice of Himself.

The cross, moreover, is the place where the nature of God has been vindicated; for the full claims of His holiness, and majesty have been met, and His glory established, by what Christ has borne, and the judgment that fell upon Him there. The penalties too, which divine righteousness inflicted on the man who fell, have been met, and endured, and set aside; yea, more than this, for Christ has “taken the cup” from the hand of God and drunk it to the dregs. What was contrary to God is gone forever, and gone by death. Nothing remains but the blood in the prevalence of its own efficacy, shed where we were, and because of what we were, as sinners in our sins; but carried in where God is, in the supremacy of His holiness; and we are thus “reconciled to God by the death of his Son.”

Again, the cross is the place where all that was contrary to us has been taken out of the way; the middle wall of partition, which separated man from his fellow (the Jew and the Gentile), has been there broken down. “Christ has abolished in his flesh the enmity for to make in himself of twain, one new man, so making peace.”

Besides this superiority in the flesh, of which the Jew properly boasted against the Gentile previous to the cross, there was also the corresponding “handwriting of ordinances,” which maintained this difference, as long as Christ was known according to the flesh. But at the cross this religious superiority is also set aside, and Christ has taken that out of the way, and blotted out what was contrary to us as Gentiles, who were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

Thus, in this threefold aspect of the cross, there is an end made of man in the flesh before God in Christ; and all that once separated a sinner from God has been forever put away by the sacrifice and death of our Substitute, who was nailed to it. Again, we have seen how Christ destroyed the enmity between flesh and flesh which separated man from man, and broke down the middle wall of partition which Judaism sustained. Lastly, we have traced how religious ordinances, which favored the Jew and were contrary to the Gentile, have been blotted out, and “taken out of the way, Christ nailing them to his cross.”

How plainly may we see thus the break-down of all that man was in the flesh, whether by his birth, circumcision, or religion, at the cross of Jesus Christ! Truly must God in righteousness judge, and

set aside Jew and Gentile, who had thus condemned, cast out, and crucified the Son of His own love, sent in grace and mercy into their midst. How can He any longer recognize or sustain distinctions in the flesh, when the most distinguished of men were “the betrayers and murderers” of Christ? Where would righteousness be in a scene like the cross, if God did not put down forever, not only distinctions, but the flesh itself, which had rejected Him in the person of His Son? This He has done in the double form of death by judgment on the old Adam, and by the introduction of another life, declared to be His free gift in the Second man. There is yet a further lesson from the cross for those who by grace can say, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;” and it is this. The cross discovers to such what the world is—this busy, active, self-willed world, which has rejected and killed the Savior, the Prince of glory, that it might be left free to pursue its principles and objects, in its own way.

Can there be a link then between it and one who is Christ's? Surely not, if there be any true-heartedness and loyalty according to God and to Christ, as the rejected One! No, the last link is broken, as the spirit of such a one (disentangled once and forever from all that is of it and in association with it) says, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.” If the cross be this, as regards God and Christ—sin and holiness—the flesh and the world—death and Satan—Jew and Gentile, where can we learn the true character and measure of these things, except in the place where all that was our own was judged, condemned, and brought to an end? For example, can we discover the nature and heinousness of sin anywhere else, as we are taught it at the cross, where “he who knew no sin, was made sin for us;” and who could only put it away from the presence of God by the sacrifice of Himself? We may look into ourselves, and see and feel something of what indwelling sin is, as measured and estimated by a guilty conscience, or a terror-stricken heart, and say, “O wretched man that I am!” But is this to be compared for a moment with the cry of Him who said, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” We may think of the punishment of sin “where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched;” but can any discovery of the righteous desert of transgression, as borne by those who committed it, be compared with what sin must be to the nature and being of God who could not pass it by when imputed to His only begotten and well-beloved Son, who knew no sin?

We do well, as believers in Christ, to celebrate the triumphs of the cross as regards God and ourselves, and its victories and gain to Christ raised from the dead, and crowned with glory and honor on high; but where shall we learn the lessons it has to teach us respecting all that God has blotted out and cast behind His back forever? Shall we forget that this same cross which has purchased our liberty, and is the witness of our eternal salvation, tells us that Christ “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works?” How can a Christian practically set himself in correspondence with the thoughts of God since the crucifixion, but by death—his own death—in the true confession of the darkness and death, under which the whole world has brought itself, by the rejection of Christ, and in which He has left it, who is the resurrection and the life?

Our way out from under the whole power and range of what once separated us from God is by death. It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” The penalties which are exhausted by Christ on the cross, can no longer shut out and separate us from God; on the contrary, they are the open doors of

faith's deliverance, as we follow our ascended Lord to the throne of the majesty in the heavens. “All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.” The death which Jesus died enables us now to read without terror, that “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” —because we know Him who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

It is of great moment for the believer to learn that our undisputed passage out of this world is by means of these very penalties which the righteousness of God inflicted on the man who sinned. “The wages of sin is death,” and these wages have been paid (not avoided) by our Substitute, and we are free.

By man sin entered, death entered, and the law entered into the world; and these held their undisputed title and sway, when we were born into it. Moreover, each of these three mighty powers (being what they are in relation to mankind) had their respective dominions. Besides this, we know that because of what we personally were by nature, and on account of actual transgression we added to their power; but neither of them has a title to pursue us beyond the limit of death's dominions; and this very death has been accepted and paid by Christ, as our only discharge. We are “free” by death (not by life) though a Christian, in virtue of another life communicated, asserts his deliverance by his obedience. These three dominions of sin, death, and the law, are plainly treated in Rom. 6:9, 14; 8:1, and our deliverance is as fully declared to be from under each, by death. “Wherefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” Again, “knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead: dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him.”

How different are the lessons from life unto death in the first man, and death unto life in the Second man! The first was a defeat, through the temptations of the devil: the second a victory, through resurrection from the dead “by the glory of the Father.” And as to ourselves, “sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace.” Finally, the cross is the vindication of the “throne of the majesty in the heavens” to those who dwell there, against all that outraged the government of God in the earth beneath. The great High Priest at “the right hand of God” is the guarantee to faith of the coming glory, which is God's answer to the cross, and of the travail of Christ's soul in death. In the meanwhile, God has sealed us as heirs, joint-heirs with Christ, by the Holy Ghost who dwells in us. Morally as men, and judicially as sinners, we are set right with God by the cross of Christ— “there is no condemnation.” Moreover, the reproach of Egypt the world that we came from is rolled away from us,” as we pass into the glory by ascension in the image of Him who died to bring us there. A further demonstration will thus be given of what the cross has introduced us to, as we settle in forever in the mansions which He has gone before to prepare for us in the Father's house.

Here we might close, in the happy acknowledgment of what the cross delivers from, and establishes the believer in, were it not that (during the little while we are waiting for the Lord, and carrying on the testimony of present salvation in the world where the cross of Christ is still preached, through the longsuffering grace of God), the scriptures point out three dangers, where the crafty power of the enemy lies concealed.

The first is found in 1 Cor. 1:17; “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of speech, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.” It is plain there is a double warning here—putting baptism, which is an ordinance (or, as is now affirmed, a means of sacramental grace) in the place of preaching the word, by demonstration of the Spirit, in saving power to him that believes; the other, pulpit oratory, as though the cross of Christ could gain anything in its effect on the conscience by excellence of speech.

The next danger is pointed out in Gal. 5:11, where Paul asks,” if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offense of the cross ceased.” Here it is equally plain that something good in the flesh and the consequent improvement of the flesh (for this is what circumcision supposed) is the thing which makes the offense of the cross to cease; for the cross is the denial of man in the flesh, with all his pretensions. It is therefore an offense to man as such, by showing him that he is the betrayer and murderer of the Son of God, and that there is no salvation for him as a sinner, except through the blood of Christ, which proves his guilt.

The last danger presented is in Gal. 6:12 “As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.” What is this fair show in the flesh, but an acceptance of the prevailing and established religion of the day, and so escaping persecution for the cross of Christ, which denies the formalism of mere outward and established pietism? In this instance, persecution (the natural accompaniment of the true confession of the cross) is separated from it; just as in the former examples circumcision did away with the offense of the cross, and excellency of speech made it of none effect. How little the pulpit and the churches of Christendom have attended to these warnings of the apostle is too notorious to require any comment.

B.

Chapter 25

Dead to Sin, Not to Creation: Correction

ALL exclusive points are out of place at the Lord's table. It is clear Christ's death is before us; but ε■ς τ■ω ■μ■ν ■ν■μνησιω, or ε■ς τ■ν ■ν■μνησ■ω μου does not affect the question as to whether it is a remembrance of Himself or only of His death. One way or the other, ■μ■ν is ‘of me;' and whether it be,■μ■ν or, μου, the only difference is that putting before makes it somewhat more emphatic and contrasted. It was not to be done in remembrance of deliverance from Egypt, as the passover was, but in remembrance of Him, “in my memory.”

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When Christ comes again and takes this world, and governs and blesses it, it is as Himself risen. That is true, but you can hardly call this world then the new creation. The link of life in Him with this world was broken. But then I should be a little shy of speaking of His being linked with it at any time, though coming into it as a tried man, born of a woman, for the suffering of death, and partaking (παραπλησ■ως) of flesh and blood. But He says, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” And again, “Ye are of the world, I am not of the world.” “Ye are from beneath, I am from above.” Though it be in death He is symbolized before us, it is Him we remember. But, as an effect, it does imply our having died to this world: for we show forth the Lord's death till He come.

But I cannot admit with this absoluteness, that every Christian is, according to scripture, dead to the old creation. We are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. It is held up as desirable that a man should live absolutely in the power of the Spirit and know nothing else. Still “he that marrieth does well.” Of what creation is that? And he that forbids to marry does very ill. I see two things: first, God's part in the old creation as yet fully recognized; marriage as “in the beginning;” children, amiable nature—the Lord loved the young man, when He looked on him; but, secondly, a power brought in wholly above and out of it. If one lives according to this latter, it is all well: but to condemn the former is to condemn God. Sin has come in and spoiled creation; and there is thus hindrance, care, sorrow in the flesh. That is true; but God ordered it in the beginning, and God owns what He ordered, till He brings in something new. Dead to sin, to the world, to the law—this I find in scripture; but not dead to the old creation. And this is the place of every Christian, who is to hold himself so. But dead to the old creation, God does not say; for it is God's creation. Every creature of God is good. Live above it in its present state, all well; and better, if it be given to us. But death to the first creation, and breaking every link with it, is not true, whilst we are in the body. Scripture does not say so, and scripture is much wiser than we are. There is a new creation, and, as in Christ, we are of it—I think we may say, the firstfruits of it, “of his creatures,” at any rate, καιω■ κτ■σις. It is a very singular expression. It is not “he is,” as in English. It merely affirms its existence and character for one in Christ; but then when it goes on to say He died, it is not to the old creation; but He who knew no sin was made sin; and elsewhere, In that He died, He died unto sin once.

It is wise and safe not to go beyond scripture. Fresh truths and mighty power fill our sails—and it is well; but they may carry our minds, if we trust them and consequences we draw, on to rocks hidden underneath the surface. The word of God checks, or keeps us rather, in the right and safe course. The first intuition may be right: but when not so kept, when one's mind is trusted, it may run into open ungodliness—the common result of the human mind trusted with mighty truths, or rather trusting itself with them; and in these days this has to be watched.

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It is a very humbling thing to think how always at the first what God had set up was spoiled. We have only the power of good in the midst of evil, till the Lord comes, when power is not, rest is. But Philadelphia marks our state; and as we find truth spreading, decision in walk and waiting for Christ (not the doctrine merely of His coming) will be the test. Devotedness, heavenly-mindedness—these are what we must look for. The foolish virgins were awake with the wise, but not ready. I have no doubt the doctrines we hold are penetrating widely. It is another thing to have the heart in heaven and to depart from evil on earth.

Chapter 26

Death Is Gain

The death brought into this world through sin, as the consequence of Adam's fall, separated us from God—from life also, as towards ourselves, our own natural existence—from present peace as moral beings—and from everlasting blessing. Death as the wages of sin, made us personally conscious of guilt before God—of, Satan's title over us, wrought out by our actual transgressions, “led captive by the devil at his will.”

Death—eternal death in everlasting fire—is the measure of God's righteous judgment against the sinner—the only way by which the majesty of God and the holiness of His throne could be maintained against sin and Satan.

On the other hand death, as known in Christ on the cross, has separated us from sin, from a guilty conscience on account of it, and from all fear of judgment from God, for Christ has suffered in our stead, “the just for the unjust.” The death of Christ has set aside the whole power of Satan, for through death He has destroyed him that had the power of death, and separated us by it from that nature (the old man), which, before we knew Christ, alienated us in mind and heart from God.

The judicial death of Christ on the cross has glorified God by putting away sin through the sacrifice of Himself, and opened a way by which God has displayed His power in holiness as the raiser of the dead. Moreover, the death of Christ has become the ground of all present grace to the sinner, as well as unto eternal glory between the Father and the Son, God and the elect, Christ and the redeemed, by which the heavens and the earth in the day of millennial blessing will be filled with His glory.

Again, the death and resurrection of Christ has changed the whole position of the believer before God, even the Father. We are born out of death, and take life, eternal life, in and with Christ Jesus the Lord, and as joined with Him now— “who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” We are on the other side of death, whether viewed as the enemy's power over the sinner, or as the judgment of God against sin, for we are risen with Christ. God, who made His Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, has made us to be “the righteousness of God in him.” We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us, and in the face of sin and death can say, “O death where is thy sting.... thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Our relations to death and judgment, God and Satan, the flesh and the world, are all reversed by the cross of Christ. The death which we feared, and which, before we knew Christ, fed upon us as in the flesh, is what now we feed upon—death is gain, and we “show forth the Lord's death till he come.” He spoiled the spoiler, and Satan is defeated by death. But more, the judgment of God has found its full vindication in the death of Christ; and it is now behind us. As to the world, we are not of it, even as Christ was not of the world; and, as regards the devil, “God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”

5. As a consequence of these changes and victories accomplished by the death of Christ, we cannot (for God, any more than for truth or for faith) live in the flesh or in the world, or in relation to

any other thing, from which He has redeemed us. “How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that as many of us as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ?” Our springs are in the risen and glorified Lord; and the soul is in connection by grace with Him there, and from that height we draw our life and motives for manifesting Him below. No power less than the Holy Ghost can work in us according to this new rule of life and death, in order to maintain us in correspondence with the truth about ourselves, “as it is in Jesus,” or enable us to be “imitators of God as dear children.”

B.

Chapter 27

What Is Death to the Christian? (Duplicate)

Look at what death is to the believer. The hope of the believer is not death; it is not to be unclothed (that is of himself) but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life. The purpose of God is nothing less than that we should be conformed to the image of Christ. (Rom. 8) We are to be in the presence of the Father also. Our proper hope is to see Christ as He is, and to be like Him. It is the power of divine life conforming us to Christ the Head. This is what He has wrought us for. Being in utter ruin, we can now only look to what are God's thoughts and purposes about us; but hope is not all our joy now, and when we get to heaven there will be no hope left: our proper joy is no hope at all. But now there is nothing satisfying here, and therefore one of our greatest joys is hope. What He has brought us into now is not subject of hope. We do not hope for the divine nature, or the love of God. The divine joy of the believer is having these, while rejoicing in hope, &c. We have a hope in death, but death is not our hope. There is that in it which is more than hope—the possession of life; and this death does not touch but sets free. There are some things we should be at home in, as, for instance, in God's love. Yea, at the judgment-seat of Christ, being like Him there, we may be at home. True, we shall have conflict here, trials and sufferings. The promise is “to him that overcometh.” But in spite of conflict, our hearts should he at home where God has put us. We cannot be at home here where sin is, where no water is. So far as the Spirit of God animates and fills us, we find no water here. When death comes in, it breaks every possible thought of nature—a terrible thing in this way—every thought of man gone—not a single thing to trust in—everything in nature wrecked.

Again, death is the power of Satan, which none can control. God has the power of life, but if He had called in question Satan's power in death, He would have annulled His own sentence. Death must come in, breaking every tie of nature, and bringing in every terror connected with Satan. The sentence must be executed by God Himself, and therefore it is the judgment of God. For man as he is, there is judgment after it. “It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment.” What can this judgment be? If I die, and God brings me into judgment, I must be condemned for the sin that brought me there. “Death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” I am not now speaking of deliverance. In every sense, death is a terrible thing. Besides the natural dread that even an animal has, all ties are severed; everything, however lovely, is ruined. The power of Satan ushering into judgment—it can bring nothing but the condemnation of sin. It is what God has put as a stamp on man, and no skill of man can avert it. It comes with bitter mockery amidst all the progress of which man boasts.

This is what death is in itself— “the wages of sin.” But there is another way to look at it—the way in which God has taken it up, and entirely delivered us (those who believe); so that if there is a bright spot in a man's life, it is at his death. It brings in a gleam of the future entirely by Christ. “If one died for all, then were all dead,” &c.; that “through death he might destroy him that had the, power of death, and deliver them who through fear of death,” &c. This blessed truth is simple in itself, familiar to us, that the Son of God (of whom it is said, it was not possible that He should be holden of death) has come down into it, gone under it, &c. The Second Adam came by grace into the

place of the first Adam. There we were—under sin, judgment, wrath, condemnation; and He has been under it all. “God made him to be sin.” Had He not measured the sin? Yes. Did He not know the consequences of it? Yes; yet He spared not His own Son.

Did Christ not know? Yes, and He comes in the full love of His heart to accomplish the purpose of God—to drink the cup: but such was His agony at the thought of what the cup was, that “his sweat was as it were great drops of blood.” It was the thought of sin, death, and judgment that made Him shrink from the cup, but He goes through it with God. The power of death was gone, in a sense, when those who came to meet Him saw Him. “They went backward and fell to the ground.” He had nothing to do but to go away then, but He does not. He offered Himself up. His disciples may go away, because He stands in the gap. Thus He takes the cup as judgment, suffering the penalty of sin. When on the cross, it is not now Satan, but God. He cries, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” He drank the cup thoroughly on the cross. Then He dies. His body goes down to the grave. Was it the power of Satan, when He said, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit?” He gives up His spirit, waiting for the resurrection. He went down under death—took up the whole thing—sin, Satan's power, wrath. He was “made sin for us.” “He died unto sin once.”

We have seen what death was for Christ. Now see what it is for us—in nature, everlasting wrath; but there is not a bit of the wrath, not a bit of the sin, remaining for the believer. Is He going to judge the sin He has put away? There is not a trace of it remaining. “He (has) put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” — “condemned sin in the flesh.” The strength of it all is in this, that He was “made sin,” because He had no sin of His own. He suffered for it. (Rom. 8) God “condemned sin in the flesh.” Christ has done it once for all, and now Be lives, and there is no more to be done about it. “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.” “Without sin” means having nothing more to say to it, apart from the question of sin altogether, to take us into glory. Looked at as to the nature, He had no sin; but I had sin, and this is put away: sin is entirely abolished and annulled for me. And He has come up from under the consequences of death, after sin is put away. The life He took up is in the power of an endless life. I have new life in Him, being born of the Spirit: and the life that I live I live by the faith of the Son of God.

Then what about the old man practically? Having this new life, the old man is reckoned dead. “Ye are dead.” What is dead? The old man. We are “baptized into his death.” The “corn of wheat” must die. Death ended all that was connected with itself. It is dying unto that by which we were held. The law has killed me. The effect of the law, if we see its value, is that it has killed me. I have life in Christ. Scripture does not speak of our dying to sin. We should be dying daily, but we are dead, and are to reckon ourselves dead. “Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living [alive] in the world,” &c. The old Adam is an antagonist in its will, but I am dead to it. I have done with that which hindered my going to God. A man has done with that to which he has died.

Literally, when death comes, I shall have done with what is mortal—mortality swallowed up of life. The old nature is a thorn I shall be glad to get rid of, mortal, corrupt, under the power of Satan. The one thing that will be gone is corruption—mortality. The mortal body having died, I shall have nothing more to do with death or the old nature. What of the new nature? Is this done with? It is getting home, where the affections will have full play. It is having done with the first Adam, and

getting a great deal more of the Second, in death. I have got rid of mortality when I die, always confident, “knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.” Who is this person? The new man. I am absent from the body and present with the Lord.

Leaving this wretched poor mortality to be with Christ is positive gain. It will be better still to be in the glory with Him, complete in all with Christ; but now it is gain to die.

What was Christ's own thought about dying? What He said to the thief shows— “This day shalt thou be with me in paradise;” and to His disciples, “If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father.” In Christ there was the perfect consciousness of gain. Was Stephen less happy in his measure when he died? “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

The fact of death is leaving the old man entirely behind, and going to be with Christ. There is positive gain in having done, in measure by faith now, or in fact by and by, with mortality. Then there is the dying daily, but there is not a single thing in which death can come that is not positive gain, and for the life of the spirit. The sorrow which comes in by the breaking of natural ties is for blessing, reducing the flesh, &c. If there be will in the sorrow, it is bad; but trial is meant to be felt.

Peter did not like the thought of the cross. His flesh was not broken down to the point of the revelation he had from God. Then there must be a process gone through to break it down, either with God in secret or through discipline.

Chapter 28

Ecclesiastical System on Earth

The rejection of the last phase of the ecclesiastical system on earth is the starting-point of the properly prophetic portion of the Revelation. (chap. 4 - 22.).

Chapter 29

The Eirenicon or a United Christendom

DR. Pusey's bold proposition of a united Christendom, published in his “Eirenicon,” has been more than welcomed of late by ecclesiastics in the Anglican Church. The silence which prevailed for so many months on the direct proposal, led some to suppose the idea was likely to be confined to the author and the book which developed the scheme. This conjecture deepened in the minds of many, as they heard rude-spoken men take up mere ritualistic observances in their grosser forms, for the purpose of proving modern innovations or practical departure from the Establishment. The Eirenicon, however, has made a path for itself, and opened the way to others far removed from the popular outcry, and the material symbols of worship which excite the multitude. Leaving this region of agitation and strife for the more scholarly interchange of thought and theory Dr. Pusey's Eirenicon is now accepted. The symbolical “olive branch” has been made matter of fact by the encyclical letter to the Patriarch of the Greek Church, by the late Primate of England. True, the Dean of Carlisle (Dr. Close) was roused against his superior, and to the pitch of declaring “rather be my hand withered than I should hold it out to the Eastern and Western Churches,” adding a hope “that the Pope would deal with the encyclical, as he dealt with Dr. Pusey's Eirenicon, nail it to the church doors.” In spite of this exceptional voice, though a loud one, the Primate, the Patriarch, and the Pope, are no longer confined within their own circles, but may meet each other as the centers of their ecclesiastical systems, but upon the avowed possibility of a united Christendom—the preliminaries are under consideration. The circle narrows, as the Dean of Canterbury (Alford) issues his proposals for union between Churchmen and Nonconformists at home. The original principle is maintained by him, but for the moment to be experimented on within the range of an ordained ministry (no longer “clergy") of England, and to be practically manifested by an interchange of pulpits, and a more mellowed social intercourse between the respective ministers and congregations.

The Dean of Westminster (Stanley), while open to the full width of his primate, yet puts into the picture his own tints and colors; and in this way, artistically illuminates what else would be too much in the sombre gray of pietism. He practically gives up the idea of an existing Establishment, and foreshadows a social revolution—the church itself being civil society. For instance, the Dean would abolish all distinctions between clergy and laity, and would recognize every man a minister who is capable of rendering good service to the community. On the other hand, if the Church and State should continue united, it is because the Church is not more holy than the State. The Politike, or State, he says, is as much invested with “divine authority” as the Church; Paul appealed to the tribunal of Caesar, and in this way recognized the supremacy of the State over the priesthood. Further, the Dean asserts there is an advantage by merging the Church in the State, as it affords scope for the growth of various opinions, and favors such changes as the State may see fit to effect, thus ignoring the existence of a body of revealed doctrine, which it is the Church's privilege to hold and to inculcate as being the ground and pillar of the truth. To crown all, Dean Stanley selects Gallio as the model statesman (though often reviled as a careless libertine), for he skewed the true judicial attitude towards petty sectarian squabbles, of which he would take no

cognizance.

The Anglican group in this sketch, though too heterogeneous and contradictory in itself, for any combined and really practical purposes connected with the evangelical party, gathers up strength from this confusion, and in this growth of various opinions finds an advantage over all the old ideas of uniformity and agreement. Scope is moreover demanded for the spread of mind and will thus liberated from the shackles of a revolution, and a corresponding responsibility to divine authority over conscience and faith.

One may well ask, What can be the product of these ideas but uncertainty upon all points respecting which the word of God is definite and obligatory? What is a united Christendom but union on the differences which mark it and have made it what it is? What is fraternization with the Eastern and Western churches but the further abandonment of the modicum of truth which made them different from each other? It is no wonder that national establishments should seek shelter under the covering wings of this Eirenicon, of larger or smaller diameter, in face of the declaration that the Politike is as much invested with divine authority as the Church. Such a fusion is but the embodiment of the prevailing idea of church extension. What is there left, but that civil society in the nineteenth century should boldly take the place of the Church on earth, and that all distinctions should be set aside in the common abandonment of the claims of the truth of God?

Shall we ask such a question as whether Christ can own this confederation? Is civil society what He loved and gave Himself for? or is it what He will present to Himself “a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing?” horrible thought! If so, what and where is the vine of the earth, which is to be cast into the winepress of the wrath of God?

The spirit of sacerdotalism is fast taking the place even of evangelical doctrine; but this change, serious though it is, as regards the effect produced on the masses, is but a consequence. The originating cause springs from the partial (where not complete) denial of revelation, and of the authority of God, by His word and Spirit, over conscience and faith. The masterminds, the guiding spirits of the present movement, which have stepped into this place of divine prerogative, have sacrificed the truth and all certainty between God and the soul to a sliding scale, which accommodates itself to the conjectures or speculations of philosophers and religionists. Fraternization or union is the absorbent of all else: and what can the value of such a unity be which is only successfully reached in the measure of its departure from the truth and from God? By what rule can this abortion be estimated as it lays hold on the two extremes of Popery and Unitarianism at the same moment?

If we drop the National Church (this troublesome excrescence of the State), and look at the schools to be established for religious education, it is only to discover the same turbulence of spirit in debate and action, upon this new problematic question. Strange that in the same country and moment, and by the same legislature, “The Educational Bill” should be announced with a “conscience clause,” when the Establishment of the country has grown weary and old under the weight of such restrictions; and only sees liberty and daylight as it cuts its way out from the entanglements, by the surrender of conscience. 'What can the State do in the double dilemma which the church and the school-house impose upon it, but Gallio-like say, “If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, reason would that I should bear with you; but if it be a question of words, and names, and of your law, look ye to it.”

Legal obligations were formerly in operation, and members were bound to profess the Christian doctrine. Tests and Corporation Acts were also in force; but these have long since been pronounced grievances, and are expunged from the records of the State which inflicted them. Vain are all the bulwarks, and an educational clause besides, which the legislature imposes as a last and puerile attempt to check the infidelity which threatens to carry everything along with it that is even a shade better than itself. The word of God and the relation of conscience to divine authority thereby is set aside: the direct link with what is Supreme has been broken, and the whole world is drifting and at sea.

The real question at issue cannot now be what it was. New forms of old corruptions are developed as the energetic movement of unbridled will rushes onward to its object. For instance, the State Church principle was formerly the antagonism to Nonconformists; but this has in measure ceased and given place to a far graver matter, the question of to-day being between Christianity and Infidelity. In the education scheme which was lately the subject of a petition from the Oxford University to the then Primate, the thing dreaded was a system which would make all Christian teaching in a high sense impracticable, and would hand over even the government of the Universities and of the English youth to those who deny the first principles of the Christian faith. What a spectacle was presented as the Archbishop received with one hand this petition from Oxford, begging that the floodgates might not be opened to superstition and infidelity; and with the other holds out a letter of amity to the head of the Greek church, proposing the closest brotherhood.

The solemn word of Isaiah's warning to a similar confederation in Israel's history may well be quoted in conclusion and as a last appeal to a united Christendom. “Associate yourselves, O ye people, 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. For the Lord spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary.”

B.

Chapter 30

Thoughts on Ephesians 6:10-20

It might seem strange at first sight that, in an epistle in which we get the greatest unfolding of the privileges we have as saints, at the same time, conflict is most brought out where we have specially the relationship of Father and of the Bride—there specially, in conflict, saints are called upon to take the whole armor of God, in order to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. It may seem strange at first sight here to talk of armor, but just where it is needed is such a place; and we never get into conflict till we realize privilege. Mark, it is not conflict of flesh and spirit, but warfare in heavenly places against spiritual wickedness; not the same as in Galatians, the flesh lusting against the Spirit. Here we are in the new creation, Christ having ascended on high as head of it, having led captivity captive, and having taken us so thoroughly out of Satan's hands that He can make us vessels of His glory in this world; and that very thing brings us into conflict. If we have hold of this place, which is ours in Christ Jesus, we must reckon on having special conflict. We cannot cross the Jordan without finding the Canaanite and Perizzite in the land. The wilderness tests the heart, but it is not Canaan. There it is not wilderness exercises, it is wrestling not against flesh and blood but spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. The subject we had lately was our being dead with Christ and risen with Him, brought into the heavenlies in Him, a most valuable and precious truth to get very distinctly hold of. It is the place of every Christian, but not realized by many. To many one has to speak of the blood on the door-post rather than of the Red Sea (i.e., the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ having entirely delivered them out of Egypt).

The whole question of sin was settled by the cross. As man was driven out of the first paradise because sin was completed, he is brought into the second because righteousness was completed and the whole question of sin settled by Christ, now sitting at the right hand of God in glory. Not a thing between God and the saints as to sin, but we have them passing through exercises of heart, all in them tested and tried in the wilderness. Then is the Jordan: they pass through death and rise again, and get into the land of Canaan and eat the old corn. “Blessed with all spiritual blessings,” &c., a place that is ours in spirit now and shall be realized hereafter. It is the character of the Epistle all through, true as to our title. But first we find Canaanites in the land. We are sure of our place in Him, but His enemies are not yet all put under His feet, and the very fact of our being there in Him is to put us in conflict with these spiritual enemies. When people speak of Jordan as death and Canaan as heaven, they forget that fighting characterizes Canaan. As soon as Joshua comes into the land, a man meets him as captain of the Lord's host with a drawn sword. A redeemed people are the Lord's host, and so completely the Lord's servants that He uses them to execute His judgments against His enemies. How could they fight the Lord's battles with the flesh? If He uses a people, He must have them dead as to the flesh. Paul does not simply reckon himself dead, but when it was a question of service, it was always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, &c. He kept all that was of Paul completely down, so that to him to live was Christ, and nothing of Paul appeared. We are delivered to death, that the life, &c. What has a dead and risen man to do with the world? As soon as Jordan is crossed (not only dead and risen, but

circumcised, putting off the body of death, mortifying the flesh), then is the old corn of the land, the reproach of Egypt being rolled away. We never get circumcision in the wilderness. What have we to do with this world as dead and risen with Christ? True we have to run across the wilderness to glory, but as one with Christ in heaven, we are the witness and testimony of what a heavenly Christ is in the world that rejects Him. And in maintaining this place, will Satan (do you think) let you alone? Infidelity, superstition, and worldliness, these are things by which Satan is seeking to get souls into his power. His wiles are things that puzzle (the cities walled up)—great forms of piety, without the power, us seen in this day. Then we get these instructions for putting on the whole armor of God, in order to be able to fight against spiritual wickedness. We are not to get through in our own strength, and we have to find out what this armor is which we have to be clothed with.

The loins girt with truth is the first thing. Subjection to the word points out our soul's state, and therefore it comes first. There can be no divine activity till the loins are girt about, a common figure in eastern countries, where the long garments are girded up, not to impede; so we get the soul into order through the power of the truth applied, and everything—the thoughts, and intents, and purposes of the heart tested by it. The Lord said, “Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” (John 17) We have in that word all the thoughts of God, that can judge and bless man, and Christ is the center of all. He was the light in the world. He brought out all the darkness in it, and applied the truth to it all. He brought out all that is divine and heavenly in a man, in contrast with all in men. People think the world is a fine place; but Satan is the prince of it—they do not believe it; but he proved himself to be so, by bringing all against Christ up to the cross, and be will head up the world against God soon. Death had not been executed up to the cross. The truth, Christ Himself, came into the world, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. When the truth is effectually applied, we get the loins girded, the whole condition, as it were, tucked up and not trailing, ready for the activity of service. I have to meet Satan, and carry on the Lord's battles, in conflict against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places; my heart is first to be tested, and to be brought into a heavenly world. Christ brought it there, and He says, Is heaven in your heart? I get the revelation of all in me that is against Christ, and all that is heavenly in Christ; my condition is the effect of truth. He was it, I get it from Him. I do not want armor walking with God—I want arming against Satan.

Next, the breast-plate of righteousness, not righteousness with God, but taking up armor against Satan, my condition of soul, and heart being right. My feet walk through the world, shod with the preparation, &c. It is the practical effect of the condition of my heart, and what a blessed condition! not selfishness, saying, “I must maintain my rights.” It is when a soul is at peace with God, he will be meek and lowly, like Christ; he goes out then in the Spirit of peace, and carries through the world the character and spirit of Christ. “Peace that passeth all understanding” keeps his heart and mind—how a man full of peace subdues all around him! Christ practically had perfect restful peace; He carried it with Him in all He passed through; in Him we have the fruits of righteousness sown in peace.

First, then, we have the loins girt—the truth of God applied, to bring the soul into a right condition; secondly, practical righteousness (breast-plate); thirdly, the feet shod with the gospel of peace. Now, we have to take up the shield of faith. I need not be thinking of self, though it is quite right to judge myself. I am to have practical faith in God. We are not called upon to confess sin but sins,

confessing the sinfulness of my nature, but it is never to be made an excuse for sinning. If I sin, it is that I have failed in keeping my eye on God, and so have failed in keeping sins down, and in keeping the enemy closely shut up. The shield of faith is having the eye on God, with perfect confidence that He can keep us walking in the light, as He is in it. Satan may do what he pleases, shoot his arrows from his lurking place; but they cannot break through the shield of faith. The victory has been attained over him by Christ as man. He not only put away sin, but through death destroyed him who has the power of death. We arc exhorted to “resist the devil,” &c. Flesh does not resist him, and if he is resisted, he knows he has met Christ in us and runs away. It is not the question of the power of Satan, but of faith, looking to Christ. The fiery darts of Satan never get through the shield of confidence in God; my weakness is just what His strength is made perfect in. What so weak as death? Christ crucified through weakness. What so contemptible to man as the cross? But it is the wisdom and the power of God.

When we own ourselves weak, then we have power from God to overcome Satan. He is a most subtle enemy, he knows how to deal with man, and is much cleverer than the wisest of men; therefore when you see learned and clever men give way to folly, you must remember that Satan is behind it all; they are using his strength and he is laughing at them. If the shield of faith is down, the fiery darts will get in.

How blessed to know we have Christ to go through everything with, and having Him all the evil in the world cannot overcome us. It is not “Because I go to the Father, you shall overcome the world; but I have overcome it.” Still we have to be overcomers in a world where Satan, as the power of evil, was never more actively employed than at present. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. Having full confidence in God we can hold up the head, because we have for an helmet salvation. First, godliness of walk; second, peace of mind; third, confidence in God and salvation covering him. The believer now can be active. He takes the sword of the Spirit, and fights, shielded from all the attacks of Satan. Now, there can be activity in using the sword of the word.

But we do not always judge ourselves; we do not always look to see whether we are walking in a practical sense of being all for God, so that God can be all for us, when in conflict. The first great thing, if we are to be active for the Lord, is being right with the Lord. Look at Paul, always self-judging, keeping under his body; always completely for the Lord, and the Lord completely for him: ever in the secret of the Lord's presence. He got the power of God for service—the strength of God made perfect in his weakness. He was not hindered, or distracted by circumstances, whatever came; he never drew back; he had the secret of the Lord, and could go out in service, according to what His presence and glory required. Herein do I exercise myself, to have a conscience void, &c.

“Praying always,” &c. We now get the word of God and prayer. Mary sat at the feet of the Lord, and heard His word. Then, in Luke, the disciples say to Him, “Lord, teach us how to pray;” again, “Men ought to pray always and not to faint.” The apostles appointed deacons to serve tables, that they might give themselves continually to prayer. When the Lord was in an agony of prayer, Peter was sleeping instead of watching, and so went out and denied his Lord, whilst the Lord witnessed a good confession; and when the soldiers came to take Him, He had calm power. If you want to know what prayer is, see the Lord agonizing in prayer in Gethsemane: that is prayer—no hurry or

bustle, but the soul perfectly calm with God. Has God given us to be associated with His own interests? Does not my heart yearn for the conversion of sinners? Do I not yearn to see a saint representing Christ more perfectly? I must go to God about it in earnest prayer and supplication, watching with all perseverance for the answer. The same word that is used for the praying of the Lord in Gethsemane is used by Paul here—agonizing in prayer for saints. We get this earnestness in supplication from being in the interests of God, and knowing that His interests have to be carried on in earnest supplication and prayer, watching thereunto. I have to get with God in prayer, if preaching the gospel. Prayer is the expression of entire dependence on His power; not simply asking God about things, but agonizing for the answer. People think that the Apostle Paul is beyond, sailing over the head of, all others; but what is his language? “I was with you in weakness and many tears” Faith goes with God's affairs to God, so interested with Him about them, that we make them our own. God takes the people delivered by His Son out of the hands of Satan for His own servants, saying, I want Christ to be glorified on the earth, and you are to do it. We may be poor feeble things, but we have the same interests as Christ, and His strength is made perfect in our utter weakness. What a blessed place to be in! Being made the Lord's host, to battle against His enemies and Satan. Those in the forefront of the battle need more the whole armor, because more exposed to the fiery darts, and more in the way of the enemy's snares and dangers; those who lag behind are not in the same danger. But more strength will be given to meet and overcome everything, if there is perfect dependence on and faith in God, as in John, “This is the victory that over! cometh the world, our faith.” (1 John 5:4.) But no place where one needs to be more unceasing in prayer and watchfulness as in the forefront of the battle.

In bearing witness for Christ, we first have the helmet of salvation from Christ. How little we know how to watch unto prayer! Is all that you and I pass through in the day turned into prayer, and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto for all saints? Do you find you are continuous in prayer? Do you find your heart going up in earnest agonizing supplications for the saints? Nothing I find so difficult, and nothing so tests my heart, as to the right way to think of others, as asking, Is my soul so interested in others that I can have continuous and earnest supplication going up for them? To do so, the soul must be right with God. I must think of myself else, and that stops intercession for others. It is an amazing thing to walk with God in the light, so as to be able to take up His interests; provided with this armor, which we have to keep on, to stand against Satan. Satan has no strength against those who are faithful to Christ. It is not leaning on human wisdom. Satan is much cleverer than all the learned men down here. You will always find it is where redemption is not fully rested in that Satan plays all his tricks. If the finished work of Christ were really known, and full and complete redemption rested in, all superstition and ritualism would have no ground to stand on; the foundation of it all is, that something has to be done by man to make the soul right with God. If Christ has settled the whole question for me, I do not want any of their means to settle it. The Puseyites can speak beautifully of the incarnation; but they cannot bear to hear of the finished work, or of your place with God being once and forever settled by redemption. The sophistries of rationalism and infidelity cannot tell on a soul that knows Christ, and has Him dwelling in the heart.

Oh! beloved friends, may the Lord keep us in more entire dependence and unbroken communion with God, ever walking in the presence of God, in the light, till that blessed day, so soon coming, when Christ will rise up and take us to Himself!

Chapter 31

Epistles and Gospels

We are brought “to God,” who cannot do less than bring to heaven those who are already brought to Himself.

Chapter 32

Errata

Page 243, col. 1, line 17, read, “be, in Him whom the sacrifice prefigured would be—”

Page 244, col. 1, line 14, read, “not only bring”

Erratum

Page 190, col. 2, line 13, for “presented” read punished.

Erratum

ROMANIS31. - Page 221, first paragraph. Put “and” before, NOT after, the parenthesis, thus: - “and (in its true sense, &c.) Protestantism.”

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Chapter 34

Everlasting Punishment: Part 1

[The following paper, though written originally in German and in view of the special form of the error which is rampant among the evangelicals of that land, has a sorrowful interest for us here too.-ED. B. T.]

Eternal damnation! Who does not feel the deep, serious signification of this sentence of divine justice? Who does not tremble before a fate which according to the clear unequivocal announcement of holy scripture is the portion of every fallen and unrenewed man, and which will infallibly overtake him with unrelenting severity? Everlasting condemnation! Endless woe!

However serious and important, meanwhile, this portion of divine truth in itself may be for us, still a closer examination of it becomes imperatively necessary, since in our days questions are raised with continually increasing vehemence, which are only too well adapted to shake the foundation of the truth, and to stifle its blessed influence on the conscience. The Lord Jesus has brought to light the reality of eternal damnation most clearly and decidedly; the Holy Ghost by the mouth of the apostles has confirmed it with all precision. Notwithstanding this, not only do thousands lightly allow room for doubts on this question, but not a few are bold enough to deny without hesitation the eternal and unlimited duration of damnation.

In the Romish Church, through the introduction of masses for the dead and the doctrine of purgatory connected with it, the edge of the divine judgments with regard to the eternal destiny of mankind is blunted. Rationalism and other still more sharply defined species of unbelief threaten to undermine the simple truths of scripture. Through the deceitfulness of human reasoning, in our days, an error seeks to open a path for itself, which supported by the freaks and fancies of unstable and more or less mystically inclined minds, under the name of the doctrine of the restitution of all things, has already taken root in the hearts of innumerable Christians, to spring up in due time and produce the most sorrowful fruits. We consider it therefore a holy duty to bring forth a simple testimony, based on the infallible word of God against an error, which, while it robs the truth of its power, not only checks the workings of grace in the conscience of a sinner, but also dims and blinds the eye of the believer, in regard to the counsels and ways of God in Christ, and thereby entangles and defiles the heart, and exposes it to the most destructive influences.

However, it is by no means our intention to commence a fruitless war with the determined and notorious advocates of this false system. For however earnestly we may desire and ask the Lord for their return to the truth, yet the experience of many years has convinced us that it requires a very special interposition of grace on God's part. And why? Because souls who are robbed of the light to such a degree, that they, believing a lie, have received a certain error, have either never attained to a clear consciousness of salvation, and to the full knowledge of the truth, or through the deceitfulness of sin, have gradually lost their reverence for the authority of the divine word, and have lent a willing ear to the conceited overtures of their deceived hearts. Such souls not only wantonly and determinately turn away from the truth, but also commit themselves frivolously so as to apply the most unequivocal testimonies of the truth to their system and use them for their own

ends.

Their condition undoubtedly betrays a secretly bad motive, which God must first expose before a simple testimony against their heresy can be blessed to themselves. Alas! they only too clearly confirm the words of the Lord, “If thine eye is evil, thy whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.” (Matt. 6:23.) We can therefore scarcely hope to convince them of the error of their ways; but with God all things are possible, and may He have compassion on them! Our testimony is however intended for such souls as have not yet fully accepted this doctrine as an irrefutable truth, but have already begun to allow it a place in their hearts. And oh! it is alarming how great this number is in our day! As yet the truth, planted through the scriptures in their hearts, raises a barrier against the full reception of an error with which they begin to daily: as yet the light of their spiritual eye is not so completely extinguished as to cling to an error, which is most entangling and attractive for their poor unstable souls. But certainly the danger is imminent that, if the Lord Jesus does not come in, they will get farther and farther from the truth. If their heart is still in some degree upright, we cherish the hope in the Lord, that the reading of these pages under the mighty influence of His grace may serve to their establishment in the truth.

The warning of the apostle, “But this I say, let no man beguile you with enticing words” should incite us to follow, in all cases, the only infallible word of God with holy fear, as a shining light on our path. But whence comes the deplorable ignorance, which we meet with in the present day with regard to the truth of God in so many souls? Whence comes it, that so many of whom eternal life cannot be denied, “are carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness?” (Eph. 4:14) and open their hearts to an error which relaxes the conscience, robs the truth of every support, and will inevitably entail the most disastrous consequences? Is not indifference to and disregard of this word the only cause of this lamentable state of things? Ah! how little is it searched with prayer, and under the living conviction of its divine power and majesty! How little is its influence to be perceived in the walk of many Christians! Oh that they might begin again to prize this precious word according to its divine value! Oh that the need might everywhere be felt anew to meditate therein day and night (Psa. 1:2), in order to experience its vivifying power, and enjoy its exhaustless fullness!

Truly the human understanding is not the touchstone of this word, but the word is the touchstone of the human understanding. “It is quick and powerful sharper than any two edged sword, and pierceth even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12.) When God Himself speaks, all the reasonings and imaginations of men must be silent. Everything may deceive—who can venture to deny it? But the word of God never deceives. The suggestions and wishes of our hearts may lead us astray; the word of God alone casts a clear light on our path. Reason and feeling are channels which are troubled and muddy by reason of sin; the word of God alone is a clear untroubled springing fountain. Leaning on this mighty unchangeable word, we give publicity to these lines. May the Lord in His grace and by His Spirit enlighten and lead the writer and the reader, so that both may earnestly withstand a power which, belonging to the spirit of “this present evil age,” has its root and its fruit in lies and the deceitfulness of sin.

Before entering on our subject, it will be necessary to give the reader a general sketch of the way in which the supporters of the doctrine of the restitution of all things view it.

This system branches out in two different directions. On the one hand, they proclaim a final universal salvation, which will include even the devil and his angels; while, on the other hand, they deny the universal immortality of the soul, and most positively maintain, that every sinner, after suffering for a time appointed by God “from the worm that never dieth and the fire is not quenched,” will be given over to entire destruction and annihilation. The first of these ideas has many secret and open adherents in Germany, particularly in Wurtemburg; the last finds a fruitful ground in America and England, and will not therefore, as lying so far beyond our range, form the subject of inquiry in this paper. Only the view of the German advocates of this unscriptural system of a universal salvation will occupy us at present—a view that has chosen for its foundation the words “God is love;” and from this precious irrefutable truth the adherents of this system draw the conclusion that the acceptance of a universal condemnation is irreconcilable with such a love.

They therefore contend for a universal restoration embracing all creatures, because otherwise the saving love would only be able to undo for a very small number the destructive consequences of the fall. “No,” say they, “we reject a judgment that excludes love. Could even an earthly father ever feel happy who had cast out his disobedient child, and given him up to an indescribably dreadful punishment?” “And would the sorrow of God's heart as a Father ever cease, if through eternity the song of praise from the elect and the angels must be always mingled with the howling and gnashing of teeth of the lost? No, it is incompatible with His love. What can the judgment to which the hardened and God-despising souls are doomed be, but a continuous chain of those chastisements which have their origin in God's thoughts of redemption and which are already applied down here to His creatures, till every trace of sin will be obliterated and the gnawings of the worm and the pain of the fire be forever ended?”

Such are generally the views of the adherents of this doctrine. Such an assertion, however, stamps all creatures as children of God, and builds its system on the foundation of a love, which measured by human notions, flatters human nature or the flesh, and shuts out the perfect righteousness of God, or at least robs it of its characteristic edge. Let us examine these ideas in the light of the only infallible word of God, and we shall find its beams sufficiently powerful to dissipate all the shadows of human imaginations and human presumption.

It is true God works according to the fullness of His love. Even before the foundation of the world this adorable boundless love was in activity and in motion. It has manifested itself ever since man became a living soul. It unfolded itself in its fullest, brightest luster, and in its highest majesty, when God gave His only begotten Son up to death for the ungodly and for sinners; and surely it will but shine in unhindered clearness when the last enemy shall be destroyed, the last judgment executed, and God shall be all in all.

And this love, which up to this very moment is occupied with the salvation of needy sinners, will never suffer a child of God to be delivered up to the sword of the coming judgment and the unquenchable fire of hell. That is impossible, for “there is NO condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. viii. 1.) And again, “he that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life.” (John 3:36; 5:24.) All this is an undeniable truth. But he who presumes to assert that all men are in the relationship of children to

God gives the most positive evidence that be does not know the truth revealed in scripture, and that he is in entire ignorance both of the nature of God and of the sinner. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom. 8:9), says the word. We are only sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, and only we can cry “Abba Father,” when God has sent the Spirit into our hearts. (Gal. 3:26; 4:6.) It is therefore clear, that God does not enter into judgment with His children, but with a wicked world, that has scorned His love, rejected His word, and despised His only way of salvation, presented in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Evidently therefore the assertion of a universal salvation, on the ground of filial relationship, is nothing but an invention of the human mind, adapted to corrupt the sensibility, to perplex and deaden the conscience, and to shake and undermine faith in the truth of everlasting condemnation. Let us not deceive ourselves! Surely the love of God is boundless and infinite; but are His righteousness, holiness, faithfulness and truth therefore less perfect? Has His love at any time set aside the fullness of His other attributes? Ah! infallibly will all those perish who despise His love down here, and scorn the righteousness of God. And have we not the same right to ask, How can He bear this wail, if they only, as these persons admit, are exposed to indescribable torment for a period of a hundred or a thousand years?

Where then shall we find a measure for the righteousness of God? It is as perfect as God Himself. No human mind can fathom it. If we follow its traces in the history of man, we shall find it everywhere walking about with iron front to weigh the doings of man in a divinely-adjusted balance. Nothing has hindered it from pronouncing the judgment of death upon fallen man. The thunders of Sinai speak of its fullness and power and reveals that jealous God who visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. The whole history of the children of Israel shows its straight way and steady step. Its lightning struck to the ground the refractory ones in the wilderness, and to this day the whole nation bears on its forehead the curse for the rejection of the Messiah. Notwithstanding this, Israel was His chosen people, whom He loved with such a jealous love that He threatened to blot out the remembrance of the Amalekites from under heaven, for fighting against them (Ex. 17:14), and caused this threatening to be executed by Saul with the direction to spare none, but to slay men and women, children and sucklings. (1 Sam. 15:3.) Can such a righteousness, which visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, be judged by human rules? And has God ever suffered Himself to be hindered in executing His righteous threats by what men would call love? On the contrary, had not Saul to suffer the consequences of his disobedience, because he failed to carry out the requirements of God's justice in every respect.

And if we place ourselves for a moment, in spirit, upon the spot, where in that hour of darkness, under the overpowering weight of our sins, the cry rose up to God from the lips of the dying Savior, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” do we there meet a love that turned away the stroke of God's justice from the head of the only-begotten Son? Surely it was a cry of agony that told of the terrible depth of the sorrow of the righteous One made sin; and never before had such a cry of anguish reached the ear of God, who is a God of love; and yet the sword of justice delayed not a single moment in striking the avenging blow. God saw our sins on the head of Him, who voluntarily gave Himself up to the death for us; and that was enough to turn away His countenance from Him and to execute on Him in all its severity the judgment hanging over the sinner.

Only the perfect righteousness of God could do thus, and blessed be God forever! He has found so perfect a satisfaction in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that now every true believer can rejoice in the unhindered enjoyment of perfect and divine love. But is the character of God's righteousness therefore changed'? Oh! let us not deceive ourselves! It will meet the sinner, who opposes to the end such infinite love, with the same unrelenting severity, as then when the Savior bowed His precious head to its death-stroke, and then will every one know that the righteousness of God is equally as perfect as His love.

It is therefore manifest that a system is to be entirely rejected which has chosen a love for its foundation, which is not in harmony with the character of God, but betrays itself as the phantom of imaginative minds to the exclusion of the divine righteousness, holiness, and truth. Would not God after having given His law, or at least a conscience to man to distinguish between good and evil, be acting unjustly and unwisely, if He let sin go unpunished? And a ruler certainly does not merit the reproach of want of love to his subjects because he punishes the evil-doers: on the contrary, love imposes this as a duty on him.

But of God, who has proved His love to the sinner in the gift of His Son, we read “Thy right hand is full of righteousness” (Psa. 48:10), and “He will judge the world in righteousness (Psa. 9:8); and of Him it can be said with all certainty, that He punishes the evil-doers, because He loves His creatures. It is impossible therefore, that one attribute of God can exclude the other: their connection on the contrary is inseparable.

We see in the cross of Christ the perfect love of God toward the sinner, as well as His perfect hatred against sin—His perfect grace, as well as His perfect righteousness.

But it is objected, “How can God who is righteous, pronounce an everlasting punishment on sins, which committed during a short and limited period, were interrupted in their continuance?” Now where is the scale by which we can determine the amount of punishment for sin? It is quite evident that the duration of the punishment cannot be dependent on the length or brevity of the time in which the sin was committed. A person may commit a crime in five minutes, on which the best earthly government pronounces the punishment of imprisonment for life, or even of death. Even the action in itself does not determine the period of punishment. Two men for instance may be guilty of one and the same crime, and notwithstanding this, the court may sentence the one to two years, the other to twenty, because the one may be for the first time before the bar, whereas the other is known as a hardened and repeatedly punished criminal.

It is therefore impossible that the deed merely, as such, could determine the duration of the punishment. Much rather will the motives which led to it, and other accompanying circumstances, induce a mitigation or aggravation of the judicial sentence.

If then among men such a difference exists in the judgment of a wicked act, who is able to measure the punishment for the sin of men against God? Can man as the guilty one at the same time be the judge, to fix the duration of the punishment of his own sins according to a divine and righteous scale? What folly! And when even a human judge increases the punishment in case of a repetition of the crime, what will be the judgment of God on a sinner who, in spite of all the warnings and reproaches of his conscience, and even despite of all the admonitions and entreaties of the love of God to be reconciled to Him, still continues in this course of sin against his

Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor? Even in the most favorable circumstances man has never denied his true nature. Israel, God's chosen people, furnishes us with the saddest proof of this. From the lips of God Himself we hear the words, “I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.” (Isa. 1:2-6.) “Ah! sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint, from the soul of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores; they have not been closed neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” This is God's judgment of Israel. And what does Rom. 1 say about the Gentiles? What a terrible picture does 2 Tim. 3 give of the position of those who bear the name of Christ! But if we want to see the carrying out of God's judgment upon sin in all its fearful reality, let us fix our gaze on the cross.

The believer may say, “Christ bore our sins in his own body on the tree.” (1 Peter 2:24.) “He is wounded for our transgressions, he is bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.” (Isa. 53:5.) Has God given His only-begotten Son, and has the Lord Jesus willingly given His life to free the sinner from a punishment that is only temporal and passing? Why then did such a terror, such an indescribable anguish, fill His holy soul? Was it not because He, bearing our sins and made sin for us, was crushed under the terrible smitings of the wrath of a righteous and holy God? Did it need such a sacrifice if the consequence of our sins was only a temporal punishment? No. Nothing less than this shameful death of the Son of God come down from heaven on the cross would satisfy the justice of God, appease His wrath, and extinguish the flames of hell for him who believes. And surely this infinite price of redemption testifies that the damnation must also be unlimited—never ending; and the word of God speaks always of an “eternal condemnation,” of “everlasting” torment, of the “fire that is never quenched,” and the worm that “dieth not.” Ah! who are we that we can dare to judge the ways of God?

(To be continued.)

Chapter 35

Everlasting Punishment: Part 2

“But,” say they, “can it be called just, if the condemnation of all the wicked is an everlasting one, though they have not all deserved the same punishment:” In answer to this question we remark according to scripture, In the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for some than for others (Matt. 11:22-24), and that some shall be beaten with many, and others with few stripes. (Luke 12:47, 48.)

But does this call in question the eternity of punishment? By no means. We will try to illustrate this again by an example. Two persons may by the same judgment be condemned to a punishment of equal duration; but whilst the one of these prisoners has nothing to lament but the loss of his liberty and still enjoys many little comforts, the other may have only bread and water with hard labor and corporal punishment. We see therefore different degrees of punishment even down here, but still the time of imprisonment is the same. And if in human government such cases can exist, how much more may God according as the evil deeds of men vary, multiply the punishment, while nevertheless it is an everlasting due for all!

We will take another example, and suppose the case of a person in debt, which he is not in a position to pay, and cast into prison till full payment is made. Every opportunity of getting money is naturally cut off from him; but the debt is there, and he is in prison till he pays it. Surely this punishment is on the principle of a never-ending one. Whether he owes five sovereigns or 500 sovereigns does not alter the case; he is, in the one case as in the other, imprisoned till he pays. Has not God a right to act in like manner? Has not man burdened himself with a heavy debt towards Him? And how will he pay it off? The judgment pronounced by God on Israel runs thus—“Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.” Are we going to contend with Him on account of such a sentence? Certainly no one will venture to say that a person might not commit so great a crime as would impose on every righteous tribunal the necessity of passing sentence of imprisonment for life. Would it not from all sides be demanded that such a delinquent should be deprived of all the privileges which he hitherto enjoyed as a member of human society? Why then is God blamed when He finds it necessary to banish the ungodly forever from His kingdom?

What is man? He denies God the very rights that He claims for Himself. “But,” say the advocates of this doctrine, “the word of God itself gives many passages which fully convince us that the punishment of the wicked cannot be everlasting. We read, ‘For the Lord will not cast off forever, though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.' (Lam. 3:31, 32.) And again, ‘He keepeth not his anger forever, for he is merciful.' (Mic. 7:18.) And again, He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger forever.' (Psa. 103:9; comp. Isa. 57:16.) Do not these and many other passages show clearly and distinctly that the wrath of God, and therefore the punishment of the ungodly, will come to an end after a certain time?” But nothing is easier than a refutation of this objection. For even those least acquainted with scripture will know that these words are addressed to Israel. This people, so beloved of God, but set aside for a

time because of their unfaithfulness and determined rejection of the salvation offered to them in Christ, will, according to the testimony of God's word, once more be reinstated in these privileges as His earthly people. The wrath of God which will have reached its height in the days of the outpouring of His judgment over the earth, will turn, and then humbled Israel will return under the scepter of their true King, and entirely on the ground of unbounded grace, into the land of Canaan in fullness of blessing. It is evident, therefore, that it is no question here of the deliverance of the wicked from the torment of the fire that never shall be quenched, but the return of a people, which, cast off by God, is at present wandering about.

Oh that it might be understood that he who chooses any passage he pleases, the meaning of which in its connection he has not learned, for the foundation of a system, either betrays gross ignorance as to the character of God, or shows such presumption as human language can scarcely characterize!

“But,” object our opponents, “it is proved that the word ‘eternal' used in scripture does not always denote an endless continuance, but often a temporal limited state.” Accordingly the Lord in Ex. 12:14, 17, and Lev. 3:17; 6:18, 28, relative to the passover and certain offerings, says to Israel, “This shall be a memorial, ye shall keep it a feast forever, an everlasting statute, an ordinance forever.” It is indisputable that here the word “everlasting” cannot signify a never ending condition, because the whole Jewish economy under the law, with all its memorials, statutes and ordinances, has found its end in Christ. We grant this fully, but at the same time we dispute the right to draw conclusions from these passages, which could cause any erroneous apprehensions as to the question of condemnation.

Let us, therefore, go to the root of the matter, and we hope fully to enlighten the mind of the upright reader as to the meaning of the word “everlasting” or “forever,” and to prove to him how untenable this objection is.

Let us again choose some examples from every day life. When a person says to his friend, “I give you this book, it is yours forever,” he thereby simply expresses his intention not to ask for the book back again so long as it exists. But would the friend be in any doubt as to the meaning of the expression forever? We believe not. Or, when Paul writing to Philemon relative to the runaway slave Onesimus says, “For perhaps he therefore departed from thee for a season that thou shouldest receive him forever” (Philem. 1:1, 15), will therefore the meaning of the word “forever,” applied to a relationship which at any rate ended with this earthly life, present any difficulty to the unprejudiced reader? Certainly not: and when in Exodus and Leviticus the above mentioned “memorials, statutes, and ordinances” are spoken of as “everlasting” in order to give expression to this unchangeable character and continuous validity whilst the Jewish dispensation lasted, is it therefore conceivable that on this account there is any want of clearness as to the expression “forever?” Now if, in the above-mentioned passages, the meaning of “forever” denotes the unchangeableness and continuity of a condition during the existence of another state of things bound with it, where is then that other state of things relative to the everlasting condemnation of the wicked which is of limited duration and in connection with the eternity of condemnation?

Let us examine attentively the following scriptures. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (John 3:36.) “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed

from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. 1:7-9.) "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." (Luke 16:22-26.) "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." (Rev. 14:11.) "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off. it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:43-46.) Now where is the thing associated with condemnation, and the duration of which is for a limited period that hinders the "abiding" of the wrath of God, checks "everlasting destruction," cools the "parched tongue," alleviates the torments of the flames, and removes the "great gulf" which hinders the lost from escaping the torments of the fire that never shall be quenched, and the worm that never dies? If therefore the Greek word translated by "everlasting" or "forever" denotes in some cases a limited period, no one is therefore justified in transferring the same meaning to such cases, which, as we have seen, the word of God places clearly and unequivocally before our eyes in other passages. Even heathen writers have used this word to describe a never-ending condition, and the Greek language possesses no word by which it could give a more precise expression to the uninterrupted continuance of eternity. The scriptures also employ this word in several passages in a sense the unequivocal character of which even the most determined advocates of this doctrine will admit.

When for instance the apostle says "the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18); and, again, "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1); do these contrasts leave the true meaning of the contested word "eternal" still in any degree in question? Certainly not. Further, the idea that the term "everlasting" applied to the condemnation of the wicked is not the expression of an endless condition must lead each believer to the saddest conclusions. If everlasting damnation is not everlasting, what right have we to the conclusion and what security have we that the same word, when it refers to life, to salvation, to glory, and to the inheritance of the ransomed, has the meaning of a never-ending condition? The word of God says with all certainty, "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43, 44; Comp. Matt. 12:8); "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire... and these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25:41-46); Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (2

Thess. 1:9); compare “to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever” (2 Peter 2:17), and “raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever” (Jude 13); and “the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” (Rev. 14:10, 11), and “her smoke rose up forever and ever” (chap. xix. 3); and, “But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of “eternal damnation” (Mark 3:29); and “even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7). Nothing can be more decisive. But if, as these persons assert, by the expressions “everlasting fire,” “everlasting torment,” “everlasting destruction,” “everlasting judgment,” really immutably continuing conditions, are not indicated, then this can be as little affirmed when the word of God speaks of eternal life (Matt. 25:46; Luke 18:30; John 3:16, 17; 5:24 John 5:20), of “everlasting habitations” (Luke 16:9), of everlasting consolations (2 Thess. 2:16), of an “eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17), of “everlasting glory” (2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Peter 5:10), of “everlasting salvation” (Heb. 5:9), of an eternal inheritance” (Heb. 9:15), and of “everlasting kingdom.” (2 Peter 1:11.) If the reality of a never-ending condemnation of the wicked is in question, then is faith in an unbroken, continuous state of happiness also a mere fancy. Whoever denies the perpetuity of the one condition has no foundation for a belief in the perpetuity of the other. If it is not true that the wrath of God abides on the unbeliever, what security exists of everlasting life for the believer? Indeed everything loses its certainty as soon as man sets himself up as judge of the thoughts and ways of God. But what shall we say when the Lord says distinctly, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment” (Matt. 25:46)? Have we not here before our eyes the sophisms of human speculation in all their poverty and folly? If everlasting punishment has an end, why not everlasting life also? One and the same word is used to denote the duration of the one as of the other condition. The punishment of the wicked is eternal, and the life of the righteous nothing more than eternal. Would God indeed have used the same word for two conditions opposed to each other, and for all that have intended a double meaning?

The apostle says, “I would they were even cut off who trouble you.” (Gal. 5:12.) However, we find this expression denoting the time of condemnation equally applied not only to the life of the believer, to his redemption, his glory, his abode, his inheritance, but also to the existence and character of God as well as to the time of the kingdom of Christ. “According to the commandment of the everlasting God” (Rom. 16:26); “to whom be honor and power everlasting.” (1 Tim. 6:16.) “Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.” (Heb. 9:14.) “We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever.” (John 12:36.) “The Creator who is blessed forever.” (Rom. 1:25.) “God over all blessed forever.” (Rom. 9:5.) But God “the King eternal.... be honor and praise forever and ever.” (1 Tim. 1:17.) “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” (Heb. 1:8.) “That sat on the throne that liveth forever and ever.” (Rev. 4:10; compare xv. 17.) “He will reign forever and ever.” (Rev. 11:15.) These passages will suffice; and certainly no one will dispute that here the Greek word, translated by “everlasting” and “forever and ever,” leaves no room whatever for any doubtful meaning as relating to the unchangeableness and endlessness of the existence of God and His kingdom.

And now I put the question to every honest reader, Is it not presumption to interpret a passage of scripture according to one's own fancy in order to gain support for any system? And does it not become still more evident, when in the seventy-one passages in the New Testament in which the word “everlasting” is found, by far the greater number relate to the Holy Ghost, to God, as also to salvation, to life, to the inheritance and glory of the redeemed, and therefore place a continuous, endless perpetuity beyond all doubt? How can any one dare to take five or six passages, as he likes, out of these seventy-one, and to give them a meaning which forms an exception to the rule? In a word, if any one makes the assertion, because the term “everlasting” in isolated passages in the Old Testament denotes a period, that therefore the “everlasting” condemnation threatened by God can only be a passing temporary chastisement; then may another with equal right draw the conclusion from these passages, that neither “everlasting” life is a perpetual and endless condition, nor God Himself an unchangeable Being. May God in His grace preserve us all from such a terrible misuse of His holy word!

It is certainly a striking proof of the deeply sunk condition of man, that in spite of the simple and distinct declarations of God's word in regard to his future destiny, he should be guided rather by the phantoms of his own erring reason than by the revealed truth itself. When, for example, scripture says, that “he that believes on Jesus is not lost, but has everlasting life,” how can any one thence draw the conclusion that he who believes not shall one day enjoy the same lot? When with regard to the wicked it is said, “whose end is destruction,” it surely does not mean that their end, though even for a time delayed, shall at last be as glorious and blessed as that of the righteous. When it is written, “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;” these words certainly do not announce the final salvation of the wicked and their entrance into glory: and when we read after this the following words, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal„“ how can we dare to assert that the life is eternal, but the punishment temporal? In Rev. 4:10 we find the words, “And they shall worship him who liveth forever and ever.” Also in chapter xiv. 11: “And the smoke of their torment rises up forever and ever;” and lastly, in chapter xx. 10, “And they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Now when these passages clearly show that an equal duration is assigned to the punishment of the wicked as to the life of the saved, yea, as to the life of God Himself, then I should like to know whether the endlessness of condemnation could be painted in clearer colors. Or, does the Lord only wish to terrify men by a lie when He says of the blasphemer of the Holy Ghost, “he hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.” (Mark 3:29.)

But to return to a few more objections of our adversaries: they say, “Still it is written that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil. 2:10, 11), and that all shall be put in subjection under His feet (Heb. 11:6, 9), all things shall be subdued under Him (1 Cor. 15:27), we also read that Christ will reconcile all things unto Himself (Col. 1:20), and that God will gather together all things in Christ (Eph. 1:10); and lastly, we read, ‘And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject to him, who hath put all things under him that God may be all in all.' (1 Cor. 15:28.) Do not these passages speak in the most decided terms of a finally universal salvation?” Certainly not. If the advocates of this doctrine will draw in their own way upon the word of God to obtain a scriptural ground-work for their system, they cannot thus overturn the truth of God. They certainly have not thought in their quotations of these passages, that they confound two things, viz., “subjection” and “reconciliation.” I can be

subdued by my adversary without being reconciled to him. Assuredly, all power and might will one day be annihilated, and all things be subdued under the feet of Jesus, and all enemies be brought to the acknowledgment of His lordship, yea, at last even death itself will be done away. Its destruction stands in connection with the resurrection of the wicked, whom the voice of power of Christ calls out of their graves. Christ is clothed with all power and might, even death has lost its dominion over the wicked. He destroys death by raising these last to deliver them forever “to the second death, the lake of fire.” (Rev. 20:14.) But where is reconciliation spoken of here? It is an undeniable truth that in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that “Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10, 11); and none will dispute that all creatures that are in heaven and earth and under the earth will one day say, “To him who sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb, blessing and honor, and glory and power, forever and ever.” No creature is excepted; even those under the earth (or, infernal), i.e., hell with Satan and his angels, will be compelled to this homage. But has God therefore reconciled them to Himself? By no means, for when in God's word things reconciled are spoken of there is no mention made of “things under the earth.” In Eph. 1:9, 10, we read, “In that he hath made known to us the mystery of his will, namely, to gather together in one all things both which are in the heavens and which are on earth in him.” And again in Col. 1:19, 20, “For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to itself, whether the things on earth or things in the heavens.” The things under the earth (or those which stand in connection with hell, the devil and his angels) have no place here. Only those in the heavens and on earth partake in reconciliation. As regards the passage “that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28), we really do not understand how these persons can regard these words as the pinnacle of a system resting on such a rotten foundation.

When will the subjection of the Son to the Father take place? Only when all things are put under His feet, when all authority and power are abolished, and all enemies are made His footstool, then will all things come to a final conclusion. The beast and the false prophet (Rev. 19:20), the devil, death, hades, and all whose names are not found written in the book of life, are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and “will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev. 20:10, 14, 15); and now the Son delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father. Will the Father introduce a government on new principles and reject and annul all the arrangements made hitherto by the Son? How presumptuous would be such an assertion! He accepts the kingdom as the Son delivers it to Him, at the subjection of which it is solely a question of the position of Christ as man and also His lordship as such over all things. He Himself is there in His position as man entirely in subjection to the Father, as He was down here, in order “that God may be all in all.” He will take His place as man, as head of the whole redeemed family, although at the same time God and one with the Father, “blessed forever.” Can the word of God put this subject in a clearer light? Oh that this word might always be our only teacher, and our hearts humble enough to receive it in simple faith and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit!

Truly then one would always be able to distinguish the hiss of the old serpent, even when he, as once to the Lord, dared to say “It is written.” And certainly we should not then, above all things, lend an ear to the reasonings of a doctrine which sets the sacrifice of Christ on one side, or at least calls in question its imperative necessity. “No,” is the reply; “that is by no means our intention. On the contrary, we give the widest scope to the love of God, and own that the effect of the sacrifice of

Christ stretches far beyond the grave; and is it not written, 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive?' (1 Cor. 15:22.)" The sacrifice of Christ is just that which constitutes the foundation of our teaching relative to the salvation of all creatures! And notwithstanding we still assert that the adherents of such a doctrine put the sacrifice of Christ on one side. Christ suffered and died for sinners! "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Peter 2:24.) Was not this sacrifice fully sufficient to satisfy the demands of God's righteousness? Was it not enough to cleanse from sins and to give to the believer pardon, peace, life, and righteousness? But if the possibility exists for any one who dies in his sins to be prepared for salvation by his own torments and pains of hell, is then the cross of Christ the only foundation of salvation? Certainly not; on the contrary, a proof would thereby be given that the justice of God had not found complete satisfaction in the death of Christ, but in regard to certain creatures required in addition the torments of hell fire. The full sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice would then be denied, for by every addition to this sacrifice it is not only weakened but abolished.

Let us take up the Epistle to the Galatians. The false teachers of that day preached circumcision. Was it their intention to reject the cross of Christ? Oh no! They only wished to add circumcision to it. And was not circumcision commanded by the law? But what says the apostle? "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." (Gal. 5:2-4.) How solemn! An addition to the sacrifice of Christ is therefore nothing less than an entire abolition of it. If the pains of hell are still necessary to the salvation of one individual, then is the sacrifice of Christ not sufficient, not divine; and then certainly the justice of God has not been divinely satisfied. But what does the passage mean? "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:22.) Who are these "alls?"

In order the better to understand this passage, we must remember that among the Corinthians, the error was preached that there was no resurrection of the dead. (1 Cor. 15:12.) If this was in reality so, "then," as the apostle says, "their faith was vain." (Chap. 15:14) It treats here only of believers who have died and who are to be made alive again, and not of the life and redemption of all creatures, the wicked included. Adam and Christ, the two heads of two races, are brought before us. Adam brought death into the midst of all in association with him, as his descendants, "for death passed upon all men." Christ, who is the life, brings this life into the midst of all who are His; all who believe in His name possess it in Him.

The first Adam and his race are characterized by death, the last Adam and His race by life.

The simple meaning of this passage therefore is—as all find death who stand in association with the first Adam, so will all who are associated with Christ be made alive. Nothing can be simpler or clearer.

But to what inevitable consequences will our opponents be driven, through the belief that all creatures will be redeemed? They must include the devil and his angels. Certainly many among them would not dare to give their ideas so bold a scope. But why should they shrink from such a consequence, when they have the boundlessness of the love of God written on their banner?

Are not the devil and his angels creatures of God? But where do we find a sin-offering for hell and for Satan, and his angels?

Christ must become man in order to glorify as such the God that has been dishonored by men, and to take the place of sin-burdened man on the cross. If He must become man to save men, what would He have had to become to save devils? Christ died as man, and for men. But who became a propitiation for devils?

Is there still another reconciliation besides that of Christ? If all creatures will be redeemed then I am forced to this conclusion, and then is the gospel worthless and without foundation. Such is the fearful consequence of this horrible doctrine of the “restitution of all things.”

Our space however will not allow us to enter at greater length into the objections of our opponents. We believe that we have exposed the principal points of their false doctrine, and pointed out their utter groundlessness.

Every honest reader will feel with us how much we need sobriety and watchfulness, lest we should be entangled in the mazes of error.

For centuries has the eternity of punishment been believed and preached in the church, and in all times has this truth exercised an immeasurably blessed influence over the moral condition of men.

Thousands upon thousands believing in an endless duration of the terrible consequences of their sins turned to God, being condemned by their own consciences, and have been led through grace to find salvation by faith in the blood of the Lamb shed for them.

Can you who defend your unscriptural system with such obstinacy—can you, deny the mighty workings that belief in an endless, eternal condemnation has during the long period of the church's existence, called forth in the consciences of countless souls? But what are the results of your teaching? On the ground of a love that excludes the righteousness of God, and dressed in the glittering robes of a mercy which drags the exalted majesty of the character of God into the dust of human weakness and human changeableness, you preach by word and pen, with regard to a hardened sinner, the torments of hell are able to bring about that which perfect grace was never to do. You do not remember that God exclaims over Israel, “Why should you be smitten any more; you will revolt more and more.” (Isa. 1:5.)

You do not consider that in the day of the wrath of God, men terrified even to despair will continue blaspheming God, and will not repent. (Rev. 16:11-21.) You have never remarked that in regard to the wicked it will one day be said, “He that is unrighteous let him be unrighteous still,” and he “that is filthy let him be filthy still,” and “without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters,” and “whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” (Rev. 22:11-15.)

Do these passages in any way give us the slightest ground for the supposition of a change and the salvation of the damned? Ah, man by nature is sin and enmity against God, he hates his Creator and will hate Him forever, and most assuredly even in hell would he reject the sacrifice of Christ, just as he has rejected it here. And notwithstanding you continue to preach the non-eternity of punishment and the final salvation of all creatures, yea, even of devils, and to scatter seed that is beginning already under the influence of the enemy to flourish exuberantly; you violate the truthfulness of God, set aside His perfect justice, and undermine the veracity of His word, perplex

the conscience, and make souls indifferent to sin.

We know, however, that there are many among you who dare not come to the light with these ideas so highly prized by you, and that they say rather in their pretended wisdom, “We do not feel at all called upon to treat of this truth publicly, but keep it for ourselves, and let each have his own opinion.” But why this peculiar reserve? Are you convinced of the excellence of your theory Do you consider it one of God's revealed truths? Then step forth from your hiding place, that others also may become acquainted with your new gospel. Yes, go ye out into the streets and highways, and scatter your baneful but sugared poison on the hearts of unstable souls; and no doubt that great multitudes who fain would say “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die” (1 Cor. 15:32), and who would rather perish like the brute and be utterly annihilated, than enter into the presence of a righteous God—they will applaud you.

Draw near to the open graves of those who to the last have rejected the blood of Christ, despised the Spirit of grace, and say to the sorrowing bystanders, “Be comforted for the loved ones whom ye now lament will assuredly enter into glory, where ye all shall meet them,” and no doubt you will dry many tears; but ah, with a lie—a terrible deceit. Hasten with your doctrine from house to house, and you will be welcomed by thousands who feel the thought of eternal damnation insupportable, who do not wish to be disturbed in their sinful ways and their despising of God's word, who rather lend their ear to the sophistry of human calculations, and lull their conscience to sleep than seize the salvation offered them in Christ, and thus forever escape the lake burning with fire and brimstone.” Yes, do all you can, but you will never be able to invalidate the truth of God, namely, the truth “that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment” —there where “their worm never dieth and the fire is never quenched.” For that word remains irrevocably true, “after thine hardened and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds.” (Rom. 2:5, 6.)

But you, dear brethren—you, who hitherto, thanks to the preserving grace of God, have not received this fatal error into your hearts, may the Lord give you light and grace at all times to perceive the deceitfulness of sin, and mightily to testify against the ever-increasing boldness of the adherents of the system which undermines the ground of the truth, though its sophistry shakes the whole teaching of Christianity in all its parts, and lulls the awakened conscience into slumber again.

Let us testify to these poor souls that it “is a fearful thing to fall. into the hands of the living God,” and that for him who down here despises the sacrifice of Christ, there remains nothing but “a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” (Heb. 10:26, 27.) Let us testify to them that man whether saved or not must one day look eternity in the face, that he will one day find a dwelling place somewhere and forever—either in everlasting glory or in everlasting condemnation. And then, ah, but too late the dreaded reality will scare away all human deceptions. Yes, but let us testify to them by word and walk that now the mighty arms of Jesus are wide open to receive every weary, heavy laden one, and lead him into the unspeakable blessings of a never ending eternal glory. “Behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor. 6:2.)

(Concluded from page 125.)

Chapter 36

Everlasting Punishment

[The subjoined paper by the Incumbent of Eaton Chapel, Eaton Square, was submitted for examination by one whose mind seems needlessly perplexed by a different gospel which is not another. “The views,” says this enquirer, “herein expressed are being extensively received, and that by well-instructed and devout Christians [??]. The Bible teaches that the wages of sin is death; its general teaching is not endless pain, but everlasting death and destruction. Adam was not threatened with never-ending torments. Do favor me with your thoughts on this great subject. Yours gratefully, E. E. G.” This has drawn out the concluding remarks from a valued servant of God, who has seen much of the workings of this pernicious system.-ED.]

“The Eternity Of Evil.

“Finding that great misconception prevails with regard to the views propounded in a course of sermons lately preached at Eaton Chapel, I think it well to give the following summary of them.

Scripture declares, that the ‘everlasting punishment' of the wicked will consist of ‘everlasting destruction,' after the infliction of ‘many' or ‘few stripes,' according to their several deserts. The popular theory teaches, that it will consist of everlasting pain.

Scripture declares, that God will ‘destroy both body and soul in hell.' The popular theory teaches that He will destroy neither one nor the other; but preserve both of them alive forever, in unmitigated agony.

Scripture declares, that ‘our God is a consuming fire.' The popular theory teaches, that He is only a scorching fire.

Scripture declares, that the ‘fiery indignation' will devour the adversaries. The popular theory teaches, that it will do no such thing, but only torture them.

Scripture declares, that the wicked will perish like natural brute beasts. The popular theory teaches, that there will be no analogy whatever between the two cases.

Scripture declares, that whosoever 'will save his life' by unfaithfulness to Christ, shall ultimately ‘lose it' in a far more terrible manner. The popular theory teaches, that no man can lose his life more than once, and that the ‘second death' is no death at all, but eternal life in sin and misery.

Scripture declares, that whosoever ‘doeth the will of God abideth forever.' The popular theory teaches, that every man will abide forever, whether he does the will of God or not.

Scripture declares, that if we desire ‘immortality' we must seek it ‘by patient continuance in well doing.' The popular theory teaches, that every man possesses inherent indefeasible immortality, and what we have to seek for is, that it may prove a blessing and not a curse to us.

Scripture declares, that ‘the wages of sin is death.' The popular theory teaches, that it is eternal life in misery; in other words, that God will inflict upon impenitent sinners a punishment infinitely

greater than what He has pronounced to be their due.

Scripture declares, that ‘the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' The popular theory teaches, that eternal life is the common possession of all men, and that the gift of God through Christ is the privilege of spending it in holiness and happiness.

Scripture declares, that ‘the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.' The popular theory teaches, that they never will be destroyed at all, but that a portion of the universe will be specially set apart for the eternal exhibition of them in their fullest maturity.

Scripture declares, that Christ is to 'reconcile all things to God.' The popular theory teaches, that all things will never be reconciled to God; that discord and disorder will never cease, but only be confined to one particular locality.

Scripture declares, that in Christ ‘all things consist.' The popular theory teaches, that a whole kingdom will consist forever, although not ‘in Him.'

Scripture declares, that ‘he that hath the Son hath life, but he that hath not the Son of God hath not life,' that ‘if we live after the flesh we shall die, but if through the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the body we shall live.' The advocates of the popular theory say, that the life of believers and unbelievers, of natural men and spiritual men, must be of equal duration—that the doctrine of eternal happiness and the doctrine of eternal misery must stand or fall together—in other words, that if what Scripture asserts be true, what it denies must be true also.

“I take my stand, therefore, on the plain, consistent, emphatic teaching of the whole Bible, from beginning to end, as opposed to the ‘traditions of men,' which have so grievously perverted it, and thereby obscured the glory of Christ, reduced to an unmeaning form the declaration that ‘God is Love,' produced a frightful amount of infidelity, robbed the law of its terrors by making it threaten sinners with what they are sure will never be executed, incalculably weakened the saving power of the gospel, and damaged the believer's whole spiritual constitution, by putting an unnatural strain upon it, that God never intended it to bear.

“The three or four passages that are thought to confirm the traditional view have been examined in a volume entitled ‘The Glory of Christ in the Creation and Reconciliation of all things' (Longmans), and been found either to entirely fail in lending it even the appearance of support, or to be but as dust in the balance against the overpowering weight of testimony on the other side. SAMUEL MINTON, Incumbent of Eaton Chapel, Eaton Square.”

I SEE, as I have ever seen in like cases, simply Satan and the will of man in the paper of Mr. M. on “the eternity of evil.” The accompanying inquiry is in a different spirit; but it is a mere fallacy. The scripture does not merely teach that the “wages of sin is death;” though this be true, it states that after death comes the judgment—that is, that the whole proper final punishment of sin is after death. It never speaks of everlasting death; it does several times of everlasting punishment or torment. This no one can deny. That is, the facts are quite opposed to what the enquirer states. It does speak of everlasting destruction. But this proves, not that they cease to exist, but that destruction does not mean what they say, as it may last. And those who hold these doctrines admit it does last, and may a long time, for the everlasting destruction is at the coming of the Lord to be glorified in His saints (that is, at the beginning of their punishment, not at the end). That is,

“destruction” does not mean their ceasing to exist. Adam was not threatened with never-ending torments! Quite true. Life, incorruptibility, and wrath from heaven (though gathered from a few passages in the Old Testament, and rightly) were not revealed and brought to light but by the gospel. The gospel does speak expressly of everlasting punishment. And everlasting (though accommodated to what lasts as long as the thing it is attached to—to what only ceases with the existence of the object spoken of) yet properly means eternal, ■ε■ ■ν, always existing. We read of the “eternal God,” the “eternal Spirit,” an “eternal redemption,” an “eternal inheritance,” and “eternal life.” It means eternal or everlasting; and eternal life and eternal punishment go together in Matt. 25, as of equivalent import as to the word eternal. Any attempt to get rid of the force of this word proves the will of him who attempts it, and nothing else. Further, the same words are used as to torment and the existence of God. He lives “forever and ever,” and they are tormented “forever and ever.” (Rev. 14:11.)

As to the first statement of the accompanying paper it is false. Scripture does not speak of everlasting destruction after the infliction of many or few stripes. It is simply false; it speaks of everlasting destruction from His presence, when Christ comes, and it speaks of many or few stripes at the same time—in Luke—not after; proving quite the contrary—that destruction does not mean ceasing to exist.

Destruction does not mean causing to cease to exist. “The lost sheep of the house of Israel” is the same word. “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.” “Carest thou not that we perish?” Destruction cannot be everlasting if it means causing to cease to exist. Indeed, it is not said (which I merely note to show the carelessness of the writer) that “God will destroy both body and soul in hell,” but that He is able. Man can only kill the body. It is a question of power to be feared.

As to the third, it is clap-trap; and when scripture is consulted, it proves the contrary. In Deut. 4:24, God is a jealous God, a consuming fire, and Israel are destroyed (i.e., perish off the land and are scattered). They are destroyed and perish, but do not cease to exist.

This again proves the idle inattention to scripture on this weighty subject, if devouring adversaries means ceasing to exist. It is the end of sore punishment and is the same result as for those who died without mercy. Yet it is much sorer punishment; that is, the whole principle of interpretation is careless and false.

As to this, the scripture never says anything of the kind. The people are compared to beasts, not the destruction. The word too itself is used here for moral corruption, showing it does not mean mere ceasing to exist. Compare 1 Cor. 3:17 in Greek.

As to this, scripture says nothing of the kind. This is too bad, because scripture speaks expressly of the second death which is the lake of fire; that is, as far as language goes, that he does lose his life more than once. A second death is declared to be the torment of the lake of fire, not its termination; at any rate a second death is a statement of losing life more than once. I notice it to show the extreme carelessness of assertion; for I do not believe that, in the full sense of ceasing to exist, life ceases in either case.

In saying he that does the will of God abides forever, it is wholly in contrast with the fashion of this world, and there is no allusion to the wicked, good or bad; nothing is said about them elsewhere. It is taught that they survive death and are punished eternally.

It is false; it speaks of incorruptibility which scripture distinguishes from immortality; and in the passage a state of glory is referred to, not the mortality nor immortality of the soul, neither of which is spoken of.

Of this I have spoken. It is dishonest, because all admit judgment comes after. Eternal life and immortality are distinct things. Christ is eternal life (see 1 John 1), and God gives it us in giving Christ; nor is it ever said even to be in us, but in His Son; and so we have it. Eternal life is in the Son; and he that has the Son has life. This the wicked have not. The angels are immortal, but they are never said to have eternal life. There is no such thought as that eternal life is the common possession of all men; there is, that men have immortal, undying souls—a very different thing.

It is a gross blunder. The punishment of the wicked is not the work of the devil; he is in the punishment himself.

This, again, is quite false. Destruction is a strange reconciliation! But it is not said. It is said in Colossians that God will reconcile all things to Himself in heaven and in earth by Christ. But in Philippians it is said that all things bow in heaven and in earth and under the earth (infernal), not ■π■ τ■ς υ■ς, showing that there are things forced to bow which are not reconciled.

It is another blunder. All things are said to consist in Him now or subsist by Him; and so, if this argument be of any avail, the devil and wicked men do so now—and may much more reasonably when presented. But it speaks of all as creatures simply being upheld in existence by Him, as they must be by God. There is no kingdom at all.

It proves simply nothing. It speaks of spiritual life. “He that hath not the Son hath not life;” but he is fully alive now in this world; existence has nothing to do with the matter. All this is really trifling with scripture.

But I have a word to add. The doctrine presented does not say all. I have not, according to it, an immortal soul, now or at all, but a mere animal life, such as a beast has, though superior in degree of intelligence. God, it may be alleged, could give eternal life to a beast. Be it so; but the beast cannot be responsible for sin while he is a beast, nor repent of what he had done; nor can I; nor can any atonement be made for it. Thus, with a pretended doctrine of eternal life and love and mercy, responsibility, repentance, and atonement disappear. This is wholly of Satan. Scripture everywhere teaches these truths; and I cite, as first distinctly establishing it, the case of Cain. (Gen. 4:6, 7.) The creation of man brings out as distinctly as possible the difference of man's position as to his soul. (Gen. 1:24.) “And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creatures after his kind.” And man is not included. “God saw that it was good.” It was the subject creation; man's is taken up apart in verse 26, when man is created in God's image, and after His likeness. And the manner is taught in chapter ii. 7. He formed man out of the dust, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. That is, it was by a direct communication from God Himself that he became a living soul.

Hence we are declared in Acts 17 to be the offspring (the γ■νος) of God. And the body is distinctly and expressly said to be mortal in contrast with the soul, as in 1 Cor. 15 Cor. 4, &c. And where it is said, “Fear riot them which can kill the body, but afterward have no more that they can do. Fear him who, after be hath killed, hath power to cast into hell.” The testimony of scripture is express; “their [not, the] worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” “These shall go away into everlasting

punishment.” It is not punishment, if there is no one to bear punishment; and the contrast with life leaves no ambiguity as to the force of everlasting.

There is a passage which illustrates this doctrine: “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”

I can only briefly reply to what is before me. It is much more elaborately taught in other publications. Nor does it in any shape approve itself to a right-feeling mind. A hater of God, if immortal, must be miserable when time has ceased to be. Pure vengeance for a lengthened period on what is to perish is gratuitous misery. I admit fully this is no proof. It merely sinews that what men may allege as better to attract may, when rightly viewed, repel as offensive.

The remarks of Mr. M. seem to me singularly weak and careless; but it is these I have to meet here. I know it is spreading; but so is infidelity in other shapes. I have had a good deal to say to the doctrine elsewhere. Responsibility and the atonement are lost, and must be so, wherever it is received. It is simply a work of Satan. It is infidelity even as to what man is; for in this case we are beasts with a bigger brain. The creation of man directly contradicts this.

Exodus

This book, like others in the Old Testament history, differs from Genesis, in that it has one or more leading topics, instead of giving the comprehensive circle which has been shown to be characteristic of that which so fittingly opens the revelations of God. It is the account of God's deliverance of His people, who are first seen under the dealings of grace, then voluntarily put under law, and lastly under His government with provisions of mercy and mediation.

Chapter 1 shows us Israel multiplied in the strange land but persecuted, yet kept of God; chapter ii., the deliverer is born, providentially saved, brought up by Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather the reproach of Christ, escaping to Midian till God hearkens to the groans of afflicted Israel. In chapter 3 Moses sees Him that dwelt in the bush, and is sent to Pharaoh, not without signs (chap. 4) for the people, nor without the token of the mortification of the flesh of his son by her hand who had hindered it. In chapter 5 we see how God's summons and testimony increase the trial of His people at first; but (chap. 6) His name Jehovah is revealed. The I AM, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is the unchanging God of Israel, who will make good in government what He promised in grace, however he may delay during the process of putting the people to the test. In chapter 7 we see wonders begun to be wrought in the land of Ham; but the magicians imitate the plagues till that of lice extorted from them the confession of God's finger. (Chap 8.) The judgments fall more heavily in chapters 9, 10 till Moses in chapter 11 threatens the death of the firstborn, which accordingly comes in chapter 12 with the institutes of the passover for Israel, which is commanded in chapter 13 as a memorial, whilst the people go forth with a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. Then chapter 14 describes the passage of the Red Sea—death and resurrection, as chapter 12 gave us the sprinkled blood of the Lamb. Chapter 15 is the song of Moses grounded on redemption accomplished in type. Then follows the experience of the wilderness, but of grace there. The manna comes down from heaven, type of the incarnate Word, bringing in rest (the Sabbath) for the people; then follows the smitten rock with its flowing waters (the Spirit given), conflict with Amalek, and the power of intercession. Chapter 18 completes the series with a picture of the kingdom in order and righteous rule, the Gentile joining the elders of Israel in sacrifice and eating bread before God.

Chapter 19 is the transition from grace to law, under which the people—forgetful of the promises, heedless of God's ways up to this point, and ignorant of themselves—put themselves. Chapter 20 gives the ten words, followed thence to chapter 23 by laws and regulations for Israel, who (in chap. 24) are sprinkled with blood, as is the book of the law, as the sign and sanction of their legal obligations under penalty of death. Then are found the patterns of things heavenly and earthly in the vessels of the sanctuary and of its court, as well as the tabernacle itself, in chapters 25 - 31. The call to consecrate the priests intervenes in chapters 28, 29 which separates part of these types displaying God to man from the latter portion which concerns man's access to God, and therefore properly follows the priestly institution.

Chapter 32 describes the ruin of the people through idolatry; the high priest led away by their wickedness instead of standing in the gap; the tables of stone broken by the indignant lawgiver, who executes vengeance for God on the people, but intercedes for them with God. Nevertheless Moses enjoys unexampled familiarity with God, who shows to the mediator of Israel, not His face (chap. xxxiii.) but His passing by in goodness, as the terms of a covenant of mingled law and grace, so as to dwell in their midst while leading them into the place destined for His people. (Chap. 34)

Chapters 35 - 40., after bringing in the sabbath again, show us the liberality of the people, the fitted workmen, the tabernacle and its furniture made, reared, and anointed, with the cloud covering and the glory of Jehovah filling it.

Chapter 38

Extract From Correspondence: Revised by the Writer

There may be, and no doubt is, practical failure in this as in other matters; but I do not think that, as a principle, or as a rule practically, the so-called “exclusive” Brethren refuse the table to any Christian who may be walking consistently, merely because he may be connected with one or other of the various systems around. Such a course would be to abandon the true breadth of the church of God, and to make ourselves in very deed a sect. It is of the utmost importance that the absolute freedom of every believer, as a member of the body of Christ, to the Lord's table, and to all the privileges and responsibilities connected therewith, should be jealously maintained and acted Upon. What they do (and so long as this fundamental principle is secured from violation, what I trust they ever will do) is to guard against any such supposing that the ground we are upon is the same as that which others occupy; and that accordingly we ought to go in and out amongst the denominations, or at least, by expressly stipulating to let those do so who wish to break bread with us, admit that they are as right as we. Now it is just here that the shoe pinches them (to use a common but forcible figure); and, believe me, it is just here that it ought to pinch, because it is the truth of God that is involved.

It is not that we are better than they, or more faithful to the light we have received; no, but it is a question of perceiving the mind of God, as to the unity of the body of Christ on the one hand, and what is contrary to it—what in reality sectarianism is—on the other hand, and of simply holding to His will at all cost.

You will often find (and from what little you say of your friend it may be so with him) that other Christians of the more spiritual sort would like to be identified with “the Brethren” (so-called), provided we could receive them on the ground of their being at liberty, as with our sanction and approval, and as if it were scriptural, to continue in fellowship with their respective systems. It is a device of the adversary, plied with great energy, and made to press heavily upon us on all hands of late, to swamp the true character and testimony of the church of God.

We do not attempt to re-establish the church in its outward unity as at the beginning, much less do we profess to be it—that would be arrogant indeed; but we do not and cannot admit that the ground we are upon (viz., the unity of the Spirit), finds its expression in the saints' deliberately, and of choice, identifying themselves one Lord's day with one system which denies that unity in one way, and with another the next Sunday which denies it in another, and then on the third identifying us with their loose position and ways.

If a Christian, sound in doctrine, and blameless in morals and in his associations, wish to break bread with us (upon adequate testimony of those who know him to be such), none could refuse or make bargains one way or the other with him; nor could any put him away for continuing to identify himself with the orthodox systems; but that is no reason why we should not remonstrate with him, and try to teach him better. But, alas! this is just what our alleged and obnoxious exclusiveness consists in, and what those who like “liberty” in these things, better than they understand the interests of Christ that are involved, will not tolerate. Looked closely into, I am persuaded that,

without being conscious of it, a large number of Christians are too much occupied with the interests and rights of the saints with respect to this matter of fellowship. I mean too much in comparison with the interests and the rights, &c., of Christ. Both are true, but each must have its due place, Christ and His claims first; and if these be entertained, the others will inevitably follow. What now characterizes the bulk of the more spiritual and active Christians is that a preponderance of their interests is on behalf of sinners on the one hand, and on behalf of the saints on the other hand: that is to say, both evangelically and also ecclesiastically their labors begin from the human side and not from the divine. The interests of God and of His Christ are a good deal, to say the least, overlooked.

You say that your friend admits it would be inconsistent to receive “constantly” at the table one who continued to go to and fro; but are there in scripture two kinds of receiving, one less important, and less definite, and less responsible than the other? Either a person is on the ground of the church of God or he is not. If he is not, he ought to be seriously instructed, and if possible made to understand before he practically takes that ground with us, that he makes himself a transgressor in having done so if he abandon it. But whether he understand it or no, you have no right to refuse him his place, if he be not otherwise disqualified. If however he be eligible to break bread once, it could only rightly be upon ground that would make him always so; and if his not having renounced denominationalism was no obstacle at first, it could not be such at any time. He not only has title to the Lord's table as being a member of Christ, but has actually taken his place there, and, unless he should disqualify himself otherwise, is free of all its privileges and responsibilities.

It is said, Oh, but after all, the unity of the Spirit has long since been broken, and we must in all love bold one thing in the way of church fellowship to be pretty much, if not altogether, as good and as right as another: therefore who is to arrogate to themselves such exclusiveness as prevails in certain quarters? To this my reply is very simple. I deny altogether that the unity of the Spirit is broken or can be. It is an absolute and unalterable fact that the saints of this dispensation are baptized by one Spirit into one body. In Eph. 4 the saints are exhorted to keep this unity, not from disrupture, but “in the bond of peace.” They were to exhibit not outward only, but in condition of soul that unity, but it existed to be so kept, and it exists still, though we have grievously failed to hold it and to exhibit it in the bond of peace.

Now if these loose brethren, where and whoever they may be, deny that there exists this unity for the saints to keep, we do not wonder that to them one thing is pretty much as good as another. As to unity, they have themselves nothing that is divine to contend for, and do not see the use of contending, and would have us to give up the truth we have learned, and for peace' sake to resolve ourselves into a mere sect, like the denominations, and go on comfortably as they do. But no! it was the true mother of the child who exclaimed with horror at the decree of Solomon to divide it. The other had nothing to lose by it and could afford to consent; but it only betrayed the true state of the case—she had nothing to lose. The true one had a living mother's interest in a living child, whose life was most precious to her: she could not and would not consent to such a compromise. So is it with the so-called exclusives. They have—I would rather say the Lord has—something to lose by a compromise, and they cannot consent to it. Let us hold fast. We shall never really help our brethren by lowering our ground, or relaxing our hold on the truth of God as to the character and testimony of the church. Let us receive as many as will come, telling them

faithfully that in coming they take ground which, whether they apprehend it or not, utterly condemns all denominationalism; but if they come, let them come. “Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.” (Jer. 15:19.) If this seem to be taking very high ground, be it so: we dare not contend for lower. The best way to prevent their going back to what they have left is to give them what is better. The ministration of Christ to each other in the power of the Holy Ghost cannot fail to bind together those that are His.

In these remarks I have passed over the question of evil doctrine, which God suffered to trouble us some years ago. It was needful in order to arouse us to the question of fellowship; and it tested the ground we were upon, and it was found that with some, to meet “as Christians” simply had lost its true and scriptural import, and had come to signify that, if a person was a Christian, we had no responsibility to ask any other question. He might hold all sorts of evil doctrine, or be suspected of it, and yet because he was a Christian, he had his right to a place at the table of the Lord. Others seeing the evil of that principle did not see that deliberate identification in the breaking of bread with a gathering in which evil doctrine about the person of the Lord was known to be held and taught, made the individual guilty, although he did not himself imbibe it. They overlooked 2 John 10, or denied its application. They hold and have taught that the fornicator was to be put out of the church at Corinth, not because his presence defiled the assembly, but lest he should corrupt others!! Alas, what an overlooking of the character of the assembly as the place of the presence of Christ. Read Num. 19.

Jude directs us to have compassion of some, making a difference; this has always been enforced and acted upon, so far as I know. But when we find saints ignorantly linked with those who leave the door so wide open to evil, we do, and I trust ever shall, try to make them see and understand their danger, and the dishonor that is done to the Lord Jesus. I have lately been informed that some of these brethren, unable longer to resist the effect of the truth as to the unity of the Spirit upon many of the simple-hearted, are now advocating it themselves, but in such a way as to make it sanction and uphold what is really the utter denial of it. That is to say, just as, according to their reasoning, the name and profession of Christ ought to bind together individual saints in fellowship, without reference to their guilty association with evil; so the unity of the Spirit should be enforced as linking together the various denominations as such. Scripture speaks of many members, yet but one body; it does not say many bodies, yet but one body.

- O.

Chapter 39

The Father

“I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it.” These words were spoken to the Father by Christ respecting the saints. They tell us that the great business of the Lord was to acquaint saints with the Father, that such had already been His business, and that such He purposed should be His business still.

This is full of blessing. To think that our souls are under such instruction as this! The Son nourishing and enlarging in us the sense and understanding of the Father's love, and using His diligence to give our hearts that joy and to give it to us more abundantly! We may be slow and we are slow to learn it. We naturally suspect all happy thoughts of God. Christ has to use diligence and to put forth energy in teaching us such a lesson. “I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it.” But so it is. This is the lesson of which He is the teacher, and our inaptness to learn it magnifies His grace, for He is still at it, still teaching the same lesson.

The earlier chapters (14 - 16.) show us Christ declaring the Father. They begin with His telling us that the Father has opened His own house to us—nay, that He had built it with direct respect to us, having made it a many-mansioned house for our reception. (Chap. 14:2)

He then, with some resentment of their unbelief, tells them that the Father had been already revealing Himself to them. “Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” Because the things He had said and done, He had said and done as Son of the Father, as the One who was in the Father and in whom also the Father was. (Ver. 5-14.)

For this was natural unbelief, the indisposedness to learn the lesson of the Father of which I have spoken. And happy it is to find it here rebuked by the Lord. Indeed it is only faith which can sit as Christ's pupil—that principle which only listens. The moral sense of man reasons itself out of that school.

Jesus, however, goes on with the lesson in spite of this dullness. He tells them, after this interruption, how He purposed, when away, to glorify the Father in their works and in their experience. (Ver. 12-14.) And then He tells them that the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, the Holy Ghost, who was about to come to them, would come as the Spirit of the Father, letting them know that they were not orphans, but had the life of the Son in them. (Ver. 16-20.) And again He tells them that the keeping of His word would secure to their souls the presence and fellowship of the Father, as well as His, because the word was not His, but the Father's who had sent Him. (Ver. 21-24.) This word or commandment which was to be kept in order to this fellowship being secured to the soul was about love, because it was the word brought by the Son from the Father, and not a word brought from a king, or from a judge, or from a legislator. (See chap. xiii. 34; 15:12, 17.)

In all these truly blessed ways He declares the Father to us and uses Himself only as the witness or servant of such a revelation. His own personal glory is implied in such a service; but that is not His object—the declaration of the Father is. And so also, as He proceeds through this wondrous

discourse, He declares the Father to be the husbandman of the vine, thereby letting us know, that the fruit sought for is fruit worthy of a Father's hand, fruit which children, not servants or subjects, must yield.

(Chap. 15:1-14.) And again, the friendship He introduces them to with Himself has respect to the Father, because it was the Father's secrets He was communicating to them in the confidence of friendship. (Ver. 15.) And then, at the close of the same chapter, He presents the world simply in the character of having hated the Father, testified in and by the Son. (Ver. 23, 24.)

How does all this make good the word, “I have declared unto them thy name!” But further. He anticipates the day of the Holy Ghost, but He does this in constant recollection and mention of the Father. The Spirit was the Spirit of the Father, given by Him, sent by Him (chap. 14:16, 26; 15:26); and when He came, their divine Teacher now tells them that they should ask the Father and receive from Him, that this their joy as children who know a Father's love and blessing should be full.

(Chap. 16:23, 24.) And He further tells them that in that day they should plainly know their adoption, or their place with the Father. (Ver. 26.)

And somewhat beyond all this, and as crowning all He had said, He tells them that His prayers for them in heaven were not to be understood as though they and the Father were somewhat distant from each other, but that rather they must assure themselves that the Father's love rested immediately on them, as in the full power of the relation in which He stood to them. (Chap. 16:26, 27.)

Thus, it was the name of the Father He was declaring to them all through these wonderful chapters, bringing the Father into the thoughts and enjoyments of their hearts. And if love and heaven be prized by us, what welcome communications will these be!

So, on the closing chapter (17) we may say, No tidings from us return to God so acceptably as this, that we have, by faith, received these tidings of the Father. The Son brought a message of love to us from the bosom of the Father, and if He now report to the Father that we have received the message, this will be the most prized answer with the Father. And such receiving of this word about the Father will also be our truest sanctification or separation from the world, for the world is that which refuses to know the Father.

I might more shortly express it thus. In chapter 14 - 16 the Lord purposes to put our souls into communion with the Father. He fills the soul with thoughts of the Father; recollections, present exereises of spirit, and prospects, are all by Him connected with the Father. He tells us, it is the Father's house that is to receive us by and by, it was the Father who had been working and speaking in Him, so that what He had said and done had been the sayings and doings of the Father; that greater works than He had done they soon should do, for He was going to the Father; that the Comforter would be sent to them from the Father; that their fruitfulness should arise from the Father being the husbandman; that the world would bate them, because it knew not the Father nor Him that the Father Himself loved them, and that they should soon enter into the sense of their relationship to Him.

If the Spirit of truth, the Comforter, realize these things to us, we may set our seals to that word, “it is expedient for you that I go away."

May this blessed sense of relationship fill and satisfy our souls more abundantly!

He shows us Himself in heaven, as the very home of love and of glory, because He was to be restored to the Father there, and to have all things put into His hand by God there. And after this manner He anticipates heaven as the home of love and of glory to Him.

But then He lets us know that He would ever continue in His love towards us there, and in His service of our necessities—that, though there, He could never forsake either us or our need. Thus He seeks to put us into communion with Himself as He is now in heaven, just as afterward (in chapters 14 - 16.) He seeks to put us, as I have been observing, into communion with the Father.)

Chapter 40

Fragment: 2 and 3 John

The two briefer epistles (2 and 3) of John show truth as to Christ's person to be the test of true love, and to be held fast when antichrists come in. Along with this, we see the free ministration of truth, which those who assume clerical authority oppose

Chapter 41

Fragment: Cast in and Cast Out

“They cast Him out.” Cast out? yes; but where to? into the bosom of Jesus. Oh! That is cast in! Never mind the Pharisees.

Chapter 42

Fragment: Certainty of What God Is

Revelation does not tell me that I have a conscience and aspirations; it gives me the answer to them, and that is what I want—not to be told I have got such: I do not want a book for that. To answer this need of my soul, I want a certainty of what God is. I know what He is by His revelation of Himself in Christ.

Chapter 43

Fragment: Christ Our Object

If our souls go on with God, sweet as is the assurance that we, washed in the blood of Christ, belong to God, yet the uppermost thought will in the long run be Himself. We shall come back to His person. We shall in our praises weave with it what He has done, suffered, and won for us; but the first of all thoughts in our souls is, the first of all thoughts in heaven is, not what we have gained, however true, but what He has been for us and what He is to us, yea what He is in Himself.

Chapter 44

Fragment: Divine Law

The divine law asserts God's authority, and declares man's responsibility, but does not, save in type, go beyond the exercise of His judgment. The gospel reveals what God is and what He has done for the sinner in Christ. The law only required what man should be.

Chapter 45

Fragment: Dying for an Enemy

Man could die for a benefactor perhaps; but he is not capable, in true simple-hearted love, of unostentatiously dying for an enemy. God's becoming a man to do it silences the heart, and creates, by the sovereign title of love, a new order of feeling.

Chapter 46

Fragment: Ear to Hear

In Rev. 2; 3, simultaneously with bringing in the Lord's coming, the “ear to hear” comes after distinguishing the overcomers. Such a remnant only is looked for.

Chapter 47

Fragment: French Revolution

At the French revolution man emancipated himself—to have what? Uncertainty in everything, and a ruin from which he found no resource. Conscience and the bible, under God's good hand, emancipated at the reformation—imperfectly, but really; man's will, without the Bible, at the revolution

Chapter 48

Fragment: God's Ways Behind the Scenes

God's ways are behind the scenes: but He moves all the scenes which He is behind. We have to learn this, and let Him work, and not think much of man's busy movements: they will accomplish God's—the rest of them all perish and disappear. We have only in peace to do His will.

Chapter 49

Fragment: Government of God

I think that the children of God have too much forgotten the government of God—day by day. This supposes salvation. But God passes over nothing, just because we are His children

Chapter 50

Fragment: in the Spirit

John “was in the spirit on the Lord's day.” it is his place and privilege as a Christian that is spoken of, not the prophetic period. On the resurrection-day, on which Christians meet, the apostle, removed from their society, enjoyed the special elevating power of the holy spirit, though alone; and is thus and then used of God, allowed. To be banished for the purpose, for what could not ordinarily have been communicated to the church for its edification

Chapter 51

Fragment: Inspiration of Scripture

“Some inspired communications have perished,” i.e., are not in existence; e.g., the word of the Lord by Jonah the prophet of Gath-Hepher concerning the restoring of the coasts of Israel, from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain (2 Kings 14:25); the prophecy of Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath-Jearim, against Jerusalem and the land of Judah (Jer. 26:20); the prophecies of Micaiah the son of Imlah, against Ahab, which led to the king's statement— “he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil.” (2 Chron. 18:7.) It is a mistake to suppose that every inspired communication of the spirit of God to man is contained in the Bible. All that was needful for us to know and have, we possess; but not all that others, at different times, had communicated to them by the prophets. Where are the visions of Iddo the seer, against jeroboam the son of Nebat, among which some of the acts of Solomon, not mentioned in chronicles (“the rest of the acts"), were recorded? C. E. S

[Is not “the perpetual miracle in order to preserve the scriptures” a mistake? A miracle absolutely accomplishes by divine power. It is fully admitted that God works providentially to the end in view; but this is a very different statement and leaves room for the responsibility of man in his care of and reverence for the scriptures, text or translation, exposition or study; and alas! man fails here as everywhere; but God does not, and suffices for every need of His children and work. It is not meant either that any book in the Hebrew Scriptures or in the Greek New Testament is not inspired, or that any book is now lost which ever formed a part of scripture, which consists not only of inspired communications, but of those given and designed to be the permanent standard of divine truth. Even as to this the larger part of Christendom has proved faithless, not by rejecting real scripture, but by accrediting as such the Apocryphal Greek books of the Old Testament.—En. B. T.]

Chapter 52

Fragment: Liberty, Joy, Blessing, and Clearness of the Truth

No man can ever get into the liberty, joy, blessing, and clearness of the truth, unless he is acting on what he knows.

Chapter 53

Fragment: Lift up, Bear, Offer to

A■ρω is to lift up or take away—never to bear on oneself. ■ναφ■ρω is to bear, but as a sacrifice on the altar (or spiritually), for which ■ποφ■ρω is never used. Προσφ■ρω is to offer to, as in Heb. 9:14

Chapter 54

Fragment: Man Departed Before God Drove Him Out

In the garden of Eden man, conscious of sin and unable to bear the presence of God, withdrew from Him before God drove him out.

Chapter 55

Fragment: Mohammedanism

Mohammedanism has borrowed much from revelation; but it met the lusts of men as on God's part (who, as He is there represented, will and does satisfy them); Christianity does so not even in thought.

Chapter 56

Fragment: Moses

Note the difference of Moses in his intercourse with God at the bush, and what he was in Egypt—how entirely, when God is working by him, all questioning is gone. He is possessed and moves on in unhesitating energy every step, not so much thinking about the power as animated by it—having a just sense of what God was. The power was acting in him. God willed that his own state should be exercised, brought into question—brought out into his own consciousness. In Moses the power of circumcision predominates over a present God as to his heart; but God working by Moses, every trace of this disappears. Not that Moses was changed in this way morally—not necessarily so. But God had taken him up into his hand and was now using him.

The long sojourn in the desert was not the presence of God, which revealed and brought out all in his own sight between God and Moses, though it may be needed too. Nor was it his work in Egypt, for it had wholly disappeared before.

At any given time God may have us to pass on in peace, or in regular duty which requires absolutely His power and presence, without placing us in either of these cases. It is important to remember that the absence of the power of circumstances over us, and our power over them, is not necessarily our state if God is using us, though He may empty the vessel so to use it, as is indeed His way.

Chapter 57

Fragment: Person Not Merely Doctrine

It is a person whom we know, and not merely a doctrine. By this precious means which God used truths with respect to Jesus are far more connected with the Old Testament history.

Chapter 58

Fragment: Read His Word

By far the best means of assuring oneself of the truth and authority of God's word is to read His word itself.

Chapter 59

Fragment: Receiving or Rejecting Him

The presence of God himself, a man among men, changed the position of everything. Either man must receive, as a crown of blessing and of glory, the one whose presence was to banish all evil, and develop and perfect every element of good, furnishing at the same time an object which should be the center of all affections rendered perfectly happy by the enjoyment of this object; or, by rejecting him, our poor nature must manifest itself as being enmity against God, and must prove the necessity for a completely new order of things in which the happiness of man and the glory of God should be based on a new creation

Chapter 60

Fragment: the Altar and the Laver

The altar comes before the laver in what is presented to man, nor can the laver be without the altar.

Chapter 61

Fragment: the French Revolution

The working of the mere will of man, under the impulse of evil, brought about the French revolution. The Bible was not there as a restraining power, nor as formative of human inquiry and thought. Superstition and a hollow state of society came down with a tremendous crash, and all reverence for God was buried in its ruins

Chapter 62

Fragment: Walking in the Light

The world is selfish. The flesh, the passions, the desires of the mind, seek their own gratification. But, if I walk in the light, self has no place there; I can enjoy the light and all I see in it with another, and there is no jealousy. If another possess a carnal thing, I am deprived of it. In the light, we have fellow-possession of that which God gives, and we enjoy it the more by enjoying it together

Chapter 63

Fragmentary Notes

Negatives are universal, and are therefore dangerous things. If I say a thing is not in scripture, I must know all scripture to say so.

Mary is the mother of Him who is God; not mother of God, as the Roman Catholics say.

It is most important to hold Christ's eternal Sonship, for if I lose the eternal Son I lose the eternal Father also. He never could have been sent from heaven either; but He says, “I came forth from God, and am come into the world.”

It is remarkable that in chapter 1 of John's Gospel, where you have nearly all the names of the Lord, you do not get His relative names, such as Head, Priest, &c.

In the parable of the talents in Matthew we have grace; in that of the pounds in Luke, responsibility.

It is only when the coming of the Lord is looked for that you will find bridal affections.

The consciousness of life could never be produced till after redemption.

When you have Gethsemane fully brought out, as in Luke, you find the Lord humanly above the sufferings at the cross.

The object is to get the good fish and throw the bad away—I must leave the tares; that is, I discriminate as to good and not as to bad in a positive way.

The large system outside is founded on the ground of the non-recognition of Paul's ministry, a denial of the παρουσ■α—coming.

We are to be transformed into a glorified Christ, though we feed on a humbled Christ.

We have to do with a dead Christ at the Lord's table; we have no such Christ existing. The Lutheran theory is a glorified Christ brought down there.

Being occupied with a glorified Christ makes one like a humbled Christ down here. Power is in the glorified Christ (Phil. 3), character in the humbled. (Phil. 2)

Nature will neither receive the death nor the glory.

We could not have miracles now on account of the sects, because a miracle would be virtually saying, Here is the Church.

Deacons were only chosen to manage the distribution of money, and by those who gave it. Elders were authoritative and appointed from above.

Christ is Savior of the body (that is, our body).

A broad path is not a broad heart, but a broad conscience.

Do we sufficiently understand, that though it was a poor woman speaking to Him, by His side, and talking to Him about her sins, that the person to whom she was talking was God?

No sin of the saint, properly speaking, is willfulness; it is the will of the flesh: the saint yields to it, no doubt. In another shape, all sin is willfulness. But real willfulness is determination to have one's own way in spite of God, which amounts to denial of God.

Chapter 64

Fragments Gathered up: 1 Corinthians 14

1 Cor. 14 Power is subject to intelligence. So it is in God. His wisdom necessarily in action precedes His power and guides it. Just so the wisdom and moral guidance of the Spirit go before power and guide its use. It is for profit; and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. This last is a very interesting point. As a divine work it could not be otherwise. For God must be first wise.

Chapter 65

Fragments Gathered up: 2 Corinthians 3-6

What a ministry Paul speaks of in 2 Cor. 3-6! Thoroughly of God, yet it passed through man's heart to reach man's heart, which indeed is of the essence of Christianity. Not surely that it is by man's strength, but God's made good in man's weakness.

Chapter 66

Fragments Gathered up: Alienation in Nature and Standing

Besides our actual sins, there are two points of our state connected with the fall in Adam: our alienation from God in nature and will; and our alienation from God in condition, place, or standing. Both must be corrected. The former is by having Christ for our life, being born again; but this does not in itself take us out of law. The new nature feels the evil of the old, not only what we have done but what we are. It is not merely we cannot say we have not sinned, but we cannot say we have no sin. I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. The law is a mere means of discovering this. The remedy is not in dealing with it at all; but my place is altered in Christ. Not only I have a new nature, but I have died, as in the old, with Him. I am not in the flesh at all; I am in Christ who has died and risen again. I have a new nature—this must be; but Christ having died and risen again and I being in Him, I have a new place too. This is what Rom. 7; 8 teach us. Baptism is not the sign of life-giving but of change of place. We arise out of death, but death is the main point here. The “for” of verse 2 is not inferential. Verse 1 is the result of what goes before and stands by itself; verse 2 begins an explanation of the law of the whole matter in life—the change in nature, as previously the change of place or condition—deliverance, not new life. We must not confound παλιγγενεσ■α and ■ναγενν■ω. Παλιγγ is a change of state, as Matt. 19 and used for a recovery of wealth when fortune has been lost. ■ναγενν■ω means to be born again, as with βλ■πω, καιν■ξω. It has the sense of “up” often; but “again” or “back,” the beginning of something new with the sense of the contrary of what it was before. Of ■νάλ■ω, ■ωακ■μπτω, ■νακαλ■πτω. The other sense is pretty much our use of “up.” See 1 Peter 1:3, 23; Titus 3:5.

Chapter 67

Fragments Gathered up: Baptism

Paul alone puts baptism, as far as I am aware, on the ground of death and resurrection with Christ. Thus it becomes the means of doctrinally bringing the Christian on to the point, where, on the new ground and in a new position, he is united to Christ as Head.

In Romans he only carries it out to the individual position; but in Colossians he uses it not as union of course, but as that which, by taking out of flesh into what is beyond it, is the inseparable introduction into holding the Head. It is only life, but life hid with Christ in God. But He introduces holding the Head as the necessary and inseparable consequence: only the Holy Ghost is not brought out in this epistle. The connection is in chap. 1:18—not the same but connected so immediately in Christ. Hence it glimmers, though not unfolded, as in chap. 1:24, 25; 2:19.

Chapter 68

Fragments Gathered up: Church Seen Only in Christ

In the book of Revelation, as in all prophecy, the Church is seen only in Christ: so the rapture in chap. 12, and the saints are seen in full distinctness in chap. 19. Only before the prophecy begins, their place in respect of the judgments is seen (in chap. 4, as kings on their thrones, though owning all glory to be the Creator's, the Almighty; and in chap. 5 as priest).

Chapter 69

Fragments Gathered up: Ephesians 4-5

In Eph. 4; 5 God is in every way brought in. The new man is after God, &c., and the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit of God.

Chapter 70

Fragments Gathered up: Genesis 3; 1 John

Gen. 3-1 John.

Eve surrendered God to the serpent. Assurance of truth and love in God is our strong tower. (Prov. 18:10.) The lie has darkened our mind as to God: the truth restores us to God morally; the blood judicially. The Son brings the truth that God is Light and Love. He is therefore called “the Word,” “the Light of men.” He puts us back in the strong tower. (1 John 4:6.)

Chapter 71

Fragments Gathered up: Hebrews 1 and 2

Heb. 1; 2 Before presenting Christ in service founded on His person, chapter 1 not simply gives the natures to which the respective services belonged, but presents His personal glory and place—what He is, not what He does for others. In order to this last, it states His divine and human nature; but before this, as I said, His place. God now spoke (■ν υ■■) in [the person of the] Son. He is at the beginning of all creature existence as Creator, at the head of it as Heir of all things. Then, as between God and man, He reveals God, the brightness of His glory and express image of His being. He continuously upholds all things; and this, in a divine way, gives man his place with God. By Himself He purged our sins and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens—His own place, and His mediatorial place. It resembles Col. 1 in each part.

In chapter 2 we have Psa. 8 fulfilled as to the glorifying Christ, but not having all things put under His feet; but this the fruit of sufferings and death, so that as to title through righteousness God could bring sons to glory, and the power of Satan over them was destroyed. And while in the place of glorified Priest on high, where He has entitled us to enter, and where we as worshippers belong, He has passed through all the sorrows and temptations of the way so as to be perfectly suited in grace to our trials in the same path.

Chapter 72

Fragments Gathered up: Hebrews 10

Heb. 10—Here we see sin and atonement as estimated by God's thoughts and dealing. He before all, in His counsels (the volume of the book), dealt with sin in the way of His will. Christ offers Himself to come and do it. Sin is judged, thought of as God sees and thinks of it and in reference to himself. Such too is the measure of his love. And we are brought so to see it as regards ourselves. Hence the full peace and assurance we have. Atonement gets its value, and so does God's love, and sin withal.

Chapter 73

Fragments Gathered up: Job 33 and 34

Job 33 differs from chapter 36. The former speaks of God's ways with man, the latter of His ways with the righteous. Hence it does not follow from the first that man is converted: only God deals with him. If he hears, it is well, he gets the blessing. It is God—God dealing with man who owns He is and so breaking his pride: then if he hears the word, he gets the blessing.

In the latter chapter God is dealing with the righteous. He withdraws not His eyes from them: it is not only that He deals with them. Hence He has a specific object. He shows them their own ways, opens their ear, commands them to return, if they obey, and so on. This is a different and specific action. With hypocrites it is another thing. The general government of God is to be considered in the first case. (See ver. 29, 30.)

Chapter 74

Fragments Gathered up: John 1:28

John 1:28. The ground of God's first relationship with man was innocence; the next was sin, in respect of which He has developed what He is and glorified Himself in grace and divine righteousness. Hence this leads to what is heavenly, because it displays as He is there. In the new heavens and earth His relationship will not be as to innocence, nor, of course, sin, but righteousness. This is through Christ the Second Adam. It is secured in righteousness, which is past evil and all its power, but in those who have the divine quality of the knowledge of good and evil. This it is that is marked in the words, “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” Without that, God could not have been in relationship with it on the ground of righteousness.

Chapter 75

Fragments Gathered up: Matthew 26-28

Matt. 26-28

A very sure highway from our rains to His glories has been cast up and we are to tread it boldly.

All are present in this last scene; God, angels, disciples, man, Satan—proving themselves. And all get their answer. God in righteousness is satisfied—angels get fresh light and joy—feeble, failing disciples are restored—man is set aside as incurably apostate—Satan, with death, is defeated and spoiled.

Chapter 76

Fragments Gathered up: Numbers in Scripture

Numbers In Scripture.—Seven is completeness in an inward way—constituted completeness in a thing in itself, not in relationship to others, not compounded but constitutive completeness. Seven cannot be divided—it is the highest uncomposed number that cannot. Twelve is the most divisible of all, and means administrative completeness in man. So twelve tribes of Israel, and twelve apostles; as on the other hand, seven spirits of God, seven churches, seven seals and trumpets and vials.

Chapter 77

Fragments Gathered up: Promise and Covenant With Abraham

In Luke 1 the horn is raised up in the house of David, but all the expectation and testimony of the Spirit of God is connected with the promise to Abraham, when Christ (not Moses) is born. The angel only speaks of the fact. The heart of the saint recognizes the fulfillment of the promise and covenant with Abraham.

Chapter 78

Fragments Gathered up: Revelation 4-22

The rejection of the last phase of the ecclesiastical system on earth is the starting-point of the properly prophetic portion of the Revelation (chap. 4 - 22.).

Chapter 79

Fragments Gathered up: Revelation of God

Does not the nature of the effect produced as to the knowledge of God, where Christianity has existed. (or even Judaism), prove that there was a revelation of God?

Chapter 80

Fragments Gathered up: Righteousness, Life, Salvation

Righteousness—Life—Salvation.

The righteousness we enjoy is of a new order, accomplished in another, imputed to us; unlike what the law proposed and demanded. The life we breathe is of a new order, infallible and victorious, had from the risen Christ, and unlike the life in Adam which had to be tested. The salvation which we inherit is of a new order; it is reserved or kept safe for us (1 Peter 1), unlike the Canaan which Joshua divided to Israel.

Thus, “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.” Note—righteousness is discussed by Paul; life by John; and salvation in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Chapter 81

Fragments Gathered up: Son of God Reveals God Himself

It is the Son of God who reveals God Himself, and thus becomes the center of His counsels, the manifestation of His glory, and the object of His ways.

Chapter 82

Fragments Gathered up: the Fulness of Him That Filleth All in All

The fullness of Him that filleth all in all is not simply Godhead, but Christ in redemption. Eph. 4:10 leads one to this. It is redemption, He who went into the lower parts of the earth is now far above all heavens.

Chapter 83

Fragments Gathered up: Typical Meaning of the Tabernacle Metals

Typical Meaning of the Tabernacle Metals.—Gold is intrinsic righteousness in God's nature—that which we approach in Him. I do not mean His essence, but what we approach. We come to the gold within in virtue of the blood, which not only introduces us but has glorified God perfectly as to sin.

Brass is the judgment of righteousness as applied to men. Hence the altar of burnt-offerings was of brass, as the laver was of brass; one judging sin in a sacrifice, the other by the word. It marked the immutable nature of that judgment. God who could not bear sin must deal with it. The sockets of the pillars of the court were of brass. The evil, measured by what man ought to be for God, has been put away on the brazen altar. This purges the conscience, as the blood on the mercy-seat brings into the light of God Himself.

But the fillets and hooks were of silver, as what gave stability was judgment or Gilgal work. The curtains separated the profane from the holy (i.e., God's) people, as with Him apart from the world at large. The hooks on the pillars, and the fillets were silver: this seems to be grace as displayed in man, God's grace; as the brass was God's judgment firm and immutable. So did grace secure, but it was the ornament. Judgment in God's ways secures, but it is its stability and as the foundation of God's immutableness. Grace in fact is what all hangs on in its actual maintenance.

Chapter 84

Fragments Gathered up: “We Know”

“We know” is a technical expression for the portion of Christians—known to them as such. “We know that the law is spiritual;” “we know that the Son of God is come;” and so on.

Chapter 85

Fragments: God's Sacrifice

God was manifest in the flesh to fulfill a work of self-sacrifice for me. A man's sacrificing himself for me would present the highest human claim on a grateful heart; but God's doing it (that new, lovely, yet infinite fact, capable of filling the whole moral world) puts all that world in a new condition.

Chapter 86

Genesis

The first book of the Bible is the remarkable preface, as the Apocalypse is the equally striking conclusion, of the revelations of God. Its office is to present the germ, in one form or another, of nearly all the ways of God and man, which we find separately developed in the succeeding books of scripture: just as the Apocalypse is the natural close, presenting the ripened fruits even for eternity of all that had been sown from the.first, the ultimate results of every intervening interference of God and of His enemy.

Thus, Genesis sets forth the creation, of which man is chief (chap. 1.); and, adding (as we ought) the first three verses of chapter 2, the work and the rest of God, the principles of moral relationship with God and His creatures (2); the temptation of Satan with the fall, and his judgment by the Seed of the woman; and as in this chapter (3) sin against God, so in the next against man—his brother (especially this against Christ in type), sacrifice and worship, the world and the household of faith (6); the heavenly and the earthly testimonies to the coming of Christ (5); the apostasy of man (6); God's warning by His Spirit, and judgment in the deluge, with the salvation of a spared remnant in the ark and mercy to the creature (7); reconciliation in view of the earth and not of man only (8); God's covenant with creation and institution of government (9). The history of the present world is then given in its early rise and progress (10, 11.); the call and promises of God, and the history of the called (12); the heavenly and the earthly callings (13); the defeat of the confederate kings of the Gentiles, and the Melchizedec priesthood (14); the Jewish portion unfolded and confirmed, with the disclosure of long oppression previously from those specially judged, as others also (15); the typical introduction of the law or Hagar covenant (16); the intervention of God's grace, sealed by circumcision, and to be displayed in the heir of promise (17); whose further announcement is linked with the divine judgment about to fall once more on the yet more guilty world, but with intercession not in vain for the earthly people mixed up with the objects of vengeance, as the due place of those who, outside the evil, enjoy communion on high with God (18); salvation so as by fire out of the tribulation and judgment which swallow up the ungodly (19); failure of the faithful in maintaining their real relationship before the world (20); the son of promise is born, and the child of the flesh according to the law, is cast out, followed by the world's submission instead of reproof (21). Then follows the well-known shadow of Christ's death, as the provision of the Father's love and the oath of God after His resurrection (22) the covenant form of the blessing disappears (23); and the calling of the bride for the risen bridegroom, the new thing, ensues (24) Finally is seen the sovereign call of him, afterward named Israel, who is identified with the sorrows, exile, wandering, but ultimate blessing of that people (25 - 50), with the wonderful episode of his son Joseph, who is first rejected by his brethren after the flesh, suffers more still at the hands of the Gentiles, is next exalted (as yet unknown to his natural kindred) to the right hand of the throne; and lastly is owned in glory by the very brethren who had rejected him, but who now owe all to his wisdom and majesty and love.

Genesis is at once a book of matchless simplicity to him who glides over its surface, and of infinite depth to him who searches into the deep things of God.

Chapter 87

The Gifts and Calling of God

(Rom. 11)

God has at all times a mind of His own in reference to those whom He has determined to bless. This mind, in its broadest view towards man, as meeting his condition and need as a sinner, is made known by the gospel to faith through the person of God's Son, and the finished work of redemption by His death on the cross. God's counsels in grace are thus set up in testimony before every creature under heaven; and believing in Christ introduces the soul into the blessings which lie in that purpose. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”

When God by His sovereign and effectual grace thus gathers any to Himself, He makes known a purpose which exclusively pertains to them as His. This He reveals in a risen and glorified Lord and Head; and acquaintance with His mind and obedience to His will through the Holy Ghost connect His people with His thoughts and their own eternal blessing.

God had a purpose with Israel—the establishment of government upon the earth; and this He introduced by Moses and set up in the kingdom of David. A very important principle necessarily springs out of this manifestation of God to His people, since on this relation is formed their privilege, both as to intercourse with Himself and its moral result, or fruit in the sight of all around, to the glory of the Father.

Another thing is equally true, that the judgment of God finds its rule and exercise upon this ground; and by this standard “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” The way in which He introduces Himself and walks before them is to be the character of their walk towards each other.

While such manifestations of God give the common footing on which He stands with His people, yet there are higher revelations which He has made of Himself, and which, being circumscribed by calling, mark what are known as dispensations. This present one has its own peculiar communications from God the Father, consistency with which becomes our new and present consistency. Within the last half century God has been pleased to raise up in His Church a much fuller testimony to His grace in the gospel of His Son. Man, in his loud pretensions, has been exposed. Jesus, as Savior and Lord, has been exalted, and God's love seen to be triumphant by the cross over sin, the flesh, and Satan. Thousands of souls are the glad witnesses of the peace which the reception of this testimony has brought to the conscience and heart.

In addition to this, the Lord was pleased to awaken the attention of His saints to the dispensational structure of His word. Distinctions were seen to exist in the mind and actings of God towards the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church, which had long been overlooked; and this mode of dividing the word cleared away much obscurity from the eyes of His people. It was seen that these classifications were not only distinct from each other, but that each had a history peculiar to itself; and that intelligence as to this was the basis of communion with God, and with the government He executes. An immense breadth of truth was thus opened for the instruction and guidance of faith;

and as all promise and blessing were found in divine counsel to be connected with the person of the Son, so the Lord Himself became more glorious to His people, not only as the accomplisher of salvation, but the fulfiller of all their cherished hopes, whether as the “root and offspring of David,” or as “the bright and morning star.”

Hence, this connection of the Lord with His own by the past, present, and future, brought Him into that prominence which the scriptures gave Him in the counsels of God, inasmuch as all covenanted grace and promised blessing in the coming glory were seen to be made “yea and amen in Christ.” Beyond this, there were discovered to be certain relations in which Jesus stood with man and Israel, which had not as yet been maintained according to the fullness of the prophetic word, and that these could not be displayed during His rejection from the earth and while hidden at the right hand of God. The cast-out Savior, the despised Messiah, and the rejected Lord, is gone “to receive for himself a kingdom and to return,” so that the glory proper to these relations is yet future. Nor is it till His second coming that the heavens and the earth will be the scene of their display.

Many hearts, once oppressed by disappointment or perplexed with doubt, have been set at rest by these blessed disclosures of the future glory of Christ at “his appearing and kingdom.” Many a saint has also been established in the certainty of the blessed hope of the Church—its being caught up previously, to meet the Lord in the air, in view of that day when “the marriage of the Lamb is come.” All these purposes of God towards His people, and their manner of accomplishment in Christ, and the believers' portion therein by grace, according to the seasons which the sovereignty of God has appointed, were opened up, and became the common ground of enjoyment with all whom He had thus separated unto Himself by His effectual calling. But there was a further revelation of His mind before the glorification of Christ and His people could take place, and consequent upon His ascension into heaven. This was to be based upon nothing less than the presence and relation of the Holy Ghost to the body—the Church— “the habitation of God [on earth] through the Spirit.” This body, so formed and recognized, has become the new object of the Lord's special care and love, as well as of His faithful ministry as its Head. The epistles generally, and some in particular, get their very subject from these relations, and plainly reveal the mystery of Christ, and the Church—His body and His bride, “which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.”

Luther and the Reformation described its own circle for the given time, when the Papacy was dominant in Christendom; but the grand distinction between then and now, which has just been given in outline, is immense. It is scarcely possible to overrate the value which attaches to the great cardinal truth of a believer's justification by faith in a crucified Savior and Lord. Still it was but as drops from a cloud previous to the shower of blessing which was to be poured out on the Church of God, according to the largeness of His own thoughts towards His people.

Since Luther's days, God has as surely brought into prominence some further truths connected with Christ and the Church, which had been long lost; and it is of the greatest moment for us to challenge our souls whether we know and hold them fast. Who has not been interested in observing corresponding differences when reading the history of the nation of Israel under its revival kings, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, in the days of its Tirshatha, or of its scribe? Nehemiah, as we know, was occupied with building the wall of Jerusalem; and Ezra with the

re-establishment of its temple.

Luther, like Nehemiah, may thus be classified as a builder of the wall; for surely justification by faith is the great bulwark of Christianity. Ezra, with his temple work, may, in principle, be as fitly the representative of those who are now led to the acknowledgment that there is one body, and who are seeking to gather upon this ground, in the confession that “by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” Wherever the Church is thus viewed, the practical effect has been manifested in the accession of thousands from the established and dissenting forms of our times, though there has been nothing tangible or attractive to please the outward eye. All such as have been delivered in the present day from the false systems around can say, at the very least, with Ezra, “And now for a little space grace hath been shown from the Lord our God to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage, for we were bondmen.”

It is useless accounting for the present wide departure from God's revealed thoughts concerning the Church; but one may well say on this point, If the Jehovah of Israel was so imperative with Moses, that the tabernacle should, in the minutest things, be made according to the pattern showed to him on the mount, what must the offense of our day be in His sight, when the amalgamation is so complete between these establishments and the nations of Christendom, that it may be fairly said there is neither Church nor world any longer visible? These terms are no more distinctive, as relating to two bodies, essentially different in their nature and destiny. If this be questioned, where is anything to be shown which corresponds to what Paul said: “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ?” Or again; to what existing body can such a scripture as this be applied: “Ye are the epistle of Christ written in our hearts, known and read of all men"? The prophetic word by Paul and the Apocalyptic writer warn of a falling away, and of an apostasy—and it is a reflection on Pentecost and the apostles to say these are gone by—and more especially as they write of “the last times.” But it is a proper confession for all to make, that these be the days, and that we are living in the closing hours of a present evil age.

Intelligible enough to him that hath an ear to hear is that voice from heaven— “Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins.” Is this admonition bandied about from Protestantism to Popery, and from St. Peter's to St. Paul's? Let those who do so take heed, and rather accept the closing words of prophetic warning to the churches, before the Lord comes for His own, and before the angel with the sharp sickle does his work on “the clusters of the vine of the earth” when it is “cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God.” No discovery can equal that of the man who is led by the Spirit to see what is the special and particular work that God at any time is carrying on, and particularly in these last days, by which He seeks to rescue souls from the general apostasy, and bring a remnant into His own mind and work. Can we not value the separated place which Elijah held with Jehovah in the days of Jezebel, and the bright testimony which he gave to Israel against Baal? Is this altogether a voice in the past, or is there now a Thyatira, and Jezebel and her children, in the messages to the seven churches? Is it not a present warning, when the angel says, “I will kill her children with death?”

Can any one weigh these warnings and threatenings aright, who for a moment longer stays in the thing prophesied against? Would any learn to estimate the value and sweetness of the promise, “I

will sup with him," and "I will give him the morning star?" let him come out upon the authority of that word— "I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it."

May all who have followed in obedience these previous directions of the Lord to the churches, and have proved that "outside the camp" is to be with Jesus, remember the exhortation to such, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Chapter 88

The Glory of God

The path of the glory through scripture may be easily tracked, and has much moral value for us connected with it.

Ex. 13 It commences its journey in the cloud, on the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, when the paschal blood, in the grace of the God of their fathers, had sheltered them.

Ex. 14 In the moment of the great crisis it stood, separating between Israel and Egypt, or between judgment and salvation.

Ex. 16 It resented the murmurings of the camp.

Ex. 24 It connected itself with Mount Sinai, and was as devouring fire in the sight of the people.

Ex. 40 It leaves that Mount for the tabernacle, the witness of mercy rejoicing against judgment, resuming also in the cloud its gracious services toward the camp.

Lev. 9 The priest being consecrated and his services in the tabernacle being discharged, it shows itself to the people to their exceeding joy.

Num. 9 Resuming their journey in company with the tabernacle, the congregation enjoy the guidance of the cloud, which now attends the tabernacle, while the glory fills it.

Num. 16 In the hour of full apostasy it shows itself in judicial terror in the sight of the rebellious people.

Deut. 31 In the cause of Joshua, an elect and faithful vessel, it reappears in the cloud.

2 Chron. 5 On the temple being built, a new witness of grace, the glory and the cloud reappear to the joy of Israel, as of old.

Ezek. 1-11 Again, in another hour of full apostasy, the glory, taking wings and wheels to itself, as it were, leaves the temple.

Acts 7 Stephen, an earth-rejected man, sees it in heaven in company with Jesus.

Rev. 21:9 In millennial days it descends from heaven in its new habitation, the holy Jerusalem, “the Lamb's wife,” resting above in the air, from whence it shades and illumines the dwellings of Israel again (Isa. 4:5), as it once did from the cloud in the wilderness, or enters the second temple, the temple of the millennium. (Ezek. 43; Hag. 2)

Such is the path of the glory, the symbol of the divine presence. Its history, as thus traced, tells us that, if man be in company with grace, he can rejoice in it; but that it is devouring fire to all who stand under Mount Sinai. It tells us also that, while it cheers and guides them on their way, it resents the evil and withdraws from the apostasy of God's professing people.

It is very instructive and comforting to note these things in the history of the glory, which was the symbol of the divine presence. And if that presence displayed itself in other forms, the same lessons are still taught us. The most eminent of the sons of men were unable to brook it in themselves; but in Christ all, high and low, unnamed and distinguished ones, could not only bear it but rejoice in it.

Adam fled from the presence of God. But the moment he listened to the promise of Christ, believing it he came forth into that presence again with fullest and nearest confidence.

Moses, favored as he was, could not abide it save in Christ, the Rock, the riven rock of salvation. (Ex. 33)

Isaiah, chief among the prophets, dies at the sight of the glory, till a coal from the altar, the symbol of Christ in His work for sinners, purges his sin away. (Chap. 6)

Ezekiel and Daniel, companions with him in the prophetic office, with him also fail utterly in the divine presence, and are able afterward to stand it only through the gracious interference of the Son of man. (Ezek. 3; Dan. 10)

John, the beloved disciple, the honored apostle, even in the very place and time of his suffering for Jesus, takes the sentence of death into himself at the sight of the glorified Jesus till He who lived and died and lived again spoke to him and gave him peace and assurance. (Rev. 1)

These distinguished ones cannot measure the divine presence by anything but the simple virtue of what Christ is to them and for them. In that virtue they abide it at peace; and so, with them, does the most distant and unnamed one of the camp witness a scene already referred to. (Lev. 9) There, all who stood at the door of the tabernacle beholding the consecration and services of the priest, the typical Christ, triumph in the presence of the glory; as also in another scene referred to (2 Chron. 5), when the ark, another type of Christ, is brought into the house of God.

Sin and righteousness account for all this.

Sin is attended by this, as its necessary consequence—a coming short of the glory of God. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” This has been illustrated in the cases or in the histories I have been tracing. Sin incapacitates us to stand the force of the divine presence. It is too much for a sinner. But there is full relief. For if sin and incapacity to brook the presence or glory of God be morally one, so is righteousness and a return to that presence.

Sin implies a condition or state of being; and so does righteousness. And as sin is incapacity to come up to God's glory, righteousness is that which measures God's glory. It is capacity to stand in the fullest brightness of it; as those histories also illustrate. For in Christ, through the provisions of grace, or set in the righteousness of God by faith, all those whom we have looked at, whether great or small, found themselves at ease in the divine presence.

We experience all this toward our fellow-creatures. If we have wronged a person, we instinctively “come short” of his presence; we are uneasy at it, and seek to avoid it. But if we receive a. pardon from him, sealed with the full purpose and love of his heart, we return to his presence with confidence. And how much more so, I may say, if we saw that he was pressing that pardon upon us with all the skill and diligence of love, and at the same time telling us that all the wrong we had

done him had been infinitely repaired, and that he himself had good reason to rejoice in the wrong because of the repairing? Surely all this would form a ground, and be our warrant, for regaining his presence with more assurance and liberty than ever.

Now, such is the gospel. It warrants the sinner to entertain all these thoughts with full certainty. The wrong we had committed, the offense which Adam did against the love, the truth, and the majesty of God, has all been gloriously repaired by Christ. God is more honored in the satisfaction than He would have been, had the wrong never been done. All His rights are provided for in their fullest demands and to their highest point of praise. He is “just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”

Faith assumes this, and the believer, therefore, does not come short of the glory of God, though as a sinner he once did. Faith receives “the righteousness of God;” and the righteousness of God can and does measure the glory of God. In His righteousness we can stand before His glory. And that it can in this sense measure His glory—that faith in the gospel, or in the ministry of righteousness, can set us with liberty, or open face in presence of the glory of God—is taught in 2 Cor. 3; 4; yea, indeed, that the expression of that glory can be had only in the ministry of righteousness, the full glory only “in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Chapter 89

The Glory of the Only-Begotten

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.”

This was the manifestation of the Christ as Son, and declared through the Spirit by John. And it is this glory, this fullness of grace and truth, which shines throughout the public ministry of the Christ as recorded by John in chapters 1 - 9. And in the progress of that ministry, I have observed two attributes or actings of this glory.

1. It always refuses to join itself with other glory of any kind whatever.

2. It perseveres in displaying itself in defiance of every kind of resistance.

These two ways, constantly adhering to it, evince the value it had for itself, and the fixedness of the divine purpose to bless the sinner, to whose condition and necessities this glory suits itself.

In chapter 2, Jesus is tempted by His mother to let the glory of power break from Him. In chapter 3, Nicodemus invites Him to display Himself as a teacher. In chapter 6, the multitude would make Him a king. In chapter 7, His brethren would have Him show Himself to the world. In chapter 8, the Pharisees would have Him use the thunder of mount Sinai in judgment. But no offer or solicitation prevails. Jesus will not show Himself save as “full of grace and truth,” or in the glory of the “only-begotten of the Father.” He refuses to appear in any other glory or act in any other character. But then in that glory He will shine, and in that character He will act, be the resistance or hindrance what it may; and in considering this I would be, at present, a little more particular.

In chapter 4, we see the Lord insisting to shine in the glory of grace and truth, in spite of hindrance and resistance from a most determined quarter— “the law of commandments contained in ordinances.” The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. But Jesus, the Son of God, shines with as bright and diffused a beam in one region as in another, refusing to be hindered.

In chapter 5, the Lord holds on His course in the same simple undistracted character, in defiance of fear or danger. The Jews sought to slay Him, because He did these things on the sabbath day. But His answer to such danger or threatening was only this— “My Father worketh hitherto and I work;” and on He goes, still He perseveres, as the witness of the way of the Father or the grace of God, though this might only sharpen the enmity and dispose the Jews the more to seek to slay Him.

In chapter vi., this peculiar glory, by which alone He was tracking His path, again has to meet a sore hindrance. The Lord evidently feels a great moral distance from the multitude. They were very much, as we speak, His aversion. They had stirred some of the holy loathing of His righteous soul. This is evident, and this the heart knows to be a sore hindrance. But this does not hinder Him from maintaining the display of His proper glory, which was for their blessing. “Labor not for the meat that perisheth,” says He to them, “but for that meat that endureth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed.” And so in chapter vii., as in chapter v., He holds on His way, though enemies were angry and confederating, and sending officers to.

take Him. For after all this, the glory that was full of grace and truth breaks forth into some of its brightest shining, on the great last day of the feast, Jesus standing and saying, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” What vigor in the purpose must there have been which could have thus borne it on in triumph through such a series of opposition and hindrances! And so, to the very last, I may say, this glory appears in unmeasured regions. Jesus “passes by.” (Chap. ix.) He goes wherever He may go. But it is still in the same character. Change of clime, so to speak, makes no difference. The glory is still full of grace and truth, the glory “as of the only-begotten of the Father.” Jesus sees a man blind from his birth; but He is “the light of the world.” And Jesus afterward finds him cast out, but takes him up for eternity.

I know not that anything can more thoroughly assure the heart of a sinner of his interest in the Son of God than all this. No resistance prevails, no temptation. Nothing can force Him, nothing withdraw Him, from His purpose to bless them, for a single moment. That glory, and that only which suits their necessities, breaks forth on every occasion in which we see Jesus acting, urging its way through every hindrance, and retiring from every distraction. What intimates fixedness of purpose like this? If you see a man going on with his work, undaunted by opposition and undiverted by allurements, what need we more to know the singleness and decision of his soul? And such is the Son of the Father in this action. In the glory that suits the need of sinners He shines, and in that only, be the medium that would obscure it as thick as it may, or the solicitation that would distract it as flattering as it may.

O precious, saving grace! How does all this, in other language, tell us that God has found it more blessed to give than to receive! Jesus was “the Word made flesh,” “God manifest in the flesh.” And had He pleased, as these chapters show us, He might have received the praises of men, the admiration of the world, the crown of the kingdom; but He passes all by, fixed on the one purpose of carrying out the blessing to poor sinners.

Chapter 90

The Glory That Excelleth

(2 Cor. 3)

This chapter contrasts two glories—that of “the letter,” and that of “the Spirit” —law—glory, and gospel-glory, or old and new covenant glories.

Moses, as he stood at the foot of the hill, reflected or represented the glory of the law. The children of Israel instinctively shrank from it as Adam did from the voice of the Lord God in the garden. It was intolerable; and Moses had to put a vail over his face.

Moses, as he stood on the top of the hill, was in the light or sphere of the new covenant. The glory he saw was the glory of “the Lord,” or of “the Spirit,” the glory of God in the face of Jesus. And he necessarily took the vail off his face. This is very simple and full of comfort.

The old and new covenants are just, in this way, the contradiction one of another. The old calls on man to act for God, the new reveals God as acting for man. (See Heb. 8) If the soul instinctively apprehend death in the one, it instinctively apprehends life in the other. If the old demanded a vail, the new takes it away.

The first operation therefore of the glory which Moses saw on the top of the hill was to remove his vail. The light of life was shining in that region, and Moses must walk there with open face. It was not the voice of thunder that was heard there, but the voice of the truth, and Moses could not but listen. He was all eye and ear in so happy a place. He used great plainness or openness. And Paul tells us that he was in spirit exactly one with him in all this.

The second operation of the same glory is also blessed. For as it rent the vail off Paul's face, so did it leave its own impression on his face. This was another virtue which was in it, With unveiled face Paul beheld that glory and was changed into the same image from glory to glory. And he lets us see through this Second Epistle to the Corinthians, how in various rays or features of glory, he was manifesting the truth of the new covenant, or savoring of Christ (a fellow worker with Him), and thus changed into the same image.

Here, however, a distinction full of beauty and of comfort presents itself. The first of these operations is perfect, because it was accomplished solely by the Lord on Moses or Paul. When they turned to the Lord, the vail was taken away, as it will be from Israel by and by. The second of them is imperfect, because it was carried on by the Spirit in Paul. It was a progressive operation meeting with resistance from nature in Paul. We are not to measure the one by the other. This is comforting. We are not to say, because I am not fully changed into the same image, therefore is the vail not entirely taken away. This very scripture resents such a conclusion, because it skews the vail gone altogether, but the image only coming as it were progressively. Indeed, it teaches us to say this—that the vail was no more able to stand the light of the glory which shone on the top of the hill, than the Israelite was able to stand the light of the glory which shone at the foot of the hill. The face of a sinner cannot abide the one nor the vail on his face the other. But it likewise teaches

us that the second of these operations is also very excellent.

The apostle sought to reflect that glory before which he was set, as well as to enjoy it. And as I have said before, the exhibition of this in a desultory informal way is very much the business of this epistle. The early chapters present the apostle in much of the spirit, and in many of the leading moral energies, of his ministry; and such he expressly connects with the Lord and the truth which he had received, and before whom he was walking. Thus, his stability (chap. 1:17-22)—his healing a repentant brother (chap. ii. 5-10)—his being a savor to God. in all his ministry (chap. 2:14-17)—his not fainting in his labors and his renunciation of all deceit or dishonesty (chap. 4:1, 2)—his dying daily (chap. 4:10, 11)—his hoping for resurrection (chap. 4:13, 14)—his personal devotedness (chap. 5:14, 15), these and other characteristics of his service in the churches he exhibits as so many reflections of that glory he was beholding, and into the image of which he was, as from glory to glory, changing. The third chapter is, thus, in the midst of this, a disclosing of the spring of all that grace and strength he was exhibiting in his labors in the gospel. And this is real ministry.

What beautiful rays of glory shine in this way! And they are but reflections, faint reflections, of that great original glory, the glory of God in the—face of Jesus, which he was ever beholding. And then what wondrous consolation springs to our souls from this! For if Paul could thus serve—if he could walk in such ways of personal grace and devotedness in the midst of temptations and sorrows, and all this for others, what riches and glory of grace must we have to do with and to trust in, seeing that his ways are but the reflections of all that! This is, indeed, consolation. The glory which Moses reflected caused him to hide himself, for he could not bear it; the glory which Paul reflected brought him into the midst of the need and sorrow of others, there to act in full self-devotedness and grace.

Chapter 91

What God Is for Us

We have in the death and resurrection of Christ a standing witness of what God is for us.

Chapter 92

The Gold of the Mercy Seat

The gold on the mercy-seat is intrinsic, and so proper divine righteousness; the brazen altar is governmental righteousness in connection with sin. Both answer to the character of acceptance in Christ. God has in the cross judged and put away sin. He has dealt with sin so that we are free. But then in Christ's death God was perfectly glorified, and the reception before the throne is in the perfection of this. Christ is there in consequence of this and we are there in him—the righteousness of God in him. This is not dealing with sin, but what God delights in—can and must delight in. No doubt the blood on the mercy seat is witness of the putting away of sin according to the exigencies of divine perfection; but there is more than this—Christ is sitting there. On the brazen altar sin is righteously dealt with; on the golden throne divine righteousness is delighted in

Chapter 93

Grace and Truth

Scripture speaks of grace as well as truth. It speaks of God's love who gave His only-begotten Son that sinners like you and me might be with Him, know Him, enjoy Him forever, and enjoy Him now; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without fear.

Chapter 94

True Greatness

I do not know that there is a more touching lesson in any of the words or ways of our Lord Jesus Christ than that which comes before us at the last supper.

First of all His desire is to eat that paschal feast with His disciples. He was the only One who knew what it meant—the One to whom it spoke of such a burden as never was nor could be borne by mere man. And yet with desire He desired to eat of that passover before He suffered. He knew it was the immediate harbinger of His death upon the cross. Yet there was not one of the disciples that so desired to eat it with Him, as He desired to eat it with them. This is love, and love is self-sacrificing.

It was this cup that He told them to divide among themselves—not that of the Lord's supper. Our Lord Jesus never partook of His own supper. He partook of the paschal supper, but not of His own. For this is for us, being the witness of a redemption which He wrought for us (not for Himself, of course). The paschal supper was for Him as well as for the disciples, and He desired to eat it along with them. On the occasion of the passover, after its cup was passed round, He institutes His own supper; but before that He says He was no longer to drink of the fruit of the vine till the kingdom of God was come. He had done with the earth and had no fellowship more with men in flesh and blood. He took the supper, to Him not a sign of joy, but of the deepest suffering. The Lord's supper, which speaks to us of perfect peace through His suffering, He needed not: He gave it all to us.

But this very thing forthwith brings out, as grace invariably does, whatever is unjudged in nature. The more love you show, if there is not a heart that answers to it, it is but provoked by it, and takes advantage of it. The very perfection of Christ's love brought out whatever was unjudged in the disciples. As for one of them, there was nothing at all in him but unjudged self, and he betrayed his Master. As for the others, what were they doing? They were striving at that precise moment which of them should be the greatest. That was the question in their minds. Jesus was going to show that He would become the least and lowest of all, that they might be exalted; yet this was just the moment in which they had this discussion which should be the chief among them. But our Lord turned it to infinite profit, bringing out for us the character of true greatness. Self is never great, and it has the consciousness of its own littleness. Persons strive to be great, when they have no greatness in reality; whereas when the soul has found Christ and when Christ is the object of the soul, our satisfaction in His greatness forms our affections. Accordingly, here with the disciples, self was their object. Thus they were totally inconsistent with what Christ had made them. Had they had Christ, not only as their life before God, but as the object of that life, there would have been, without a thought about it, the real greatness which properly belongs to the child of God.

True greatness at the present time is shown by being nothing at all. Greatness can go down; greatness, instead of seeking to be served, serves others: greatness now, in an evil world far from God, shows itself in the resources of grace known in Christ before God, and going out of that fullness which it possesses in Christ. Everything in the world is founded on the exact opposite; and

the deeper runs the stream of the world, the greater is the desire to be something, and the desire to parade whatever we think we have. This is flesh in its littleness; and flesh and the world always keep company together. Self likes the world: it holds hard what it has got, and seeks to make a bargain with the world to get more. The knowledge of Christ delivers from all this. But a Christian who does not know that he is a Christian, who does not know that he has got Christ and eternal life in Christ is entirely inconsistent, and all else must be out of course. In order to have practical power, I must not only have the thing, but know that I have it. Supposing a man possesses all the wealth of India and does not know that he has got it, it is practically useless to him. The consequence is that the man, after the manner of men, is miserable; he can do nothing, serve nothing, help nothing. The possession of the things of this life never makes a man happy; but Christ does, and we possess all in Him.

Why was the poor widow who gave the mites the richest of all, as the Lord Jesus marks her out with His eye of love? She was the only one who had such consciousness of what she hoped for from God, that all that she had in the world was but an offering for the Lord. And we rob ourselves as well as defraud Him if we do not exercise this ennobling faith. Conscious of what we possess in Christ, all that we have is at the Lord's disposal. The consciousness of the grace of Christ imprints its own character upon us; and instead of seeking, it gives, and instead of seeking to be served by others, it loves to serve. There is not one of us that is free from this tendency to self, but there is not one that may not have a complete victory over it. Let my heart be only towards Christ and set upon Christ, and it will be impossible for Satan to get me into anything mean or selfish. But let my eye be off Christ, and there is nothing I may not do, nothing too low or too unworthy that Satan may not slip in by.

What is the Bible? The history of the struggle between God and the devil. This one thing runs from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. It is not merely a question of man, but of Satan working by man to dishonor God. The earth was the place where the battle was fought. The first Adam comes, but falls; and all the history of the Old Testament is the failure of the first Adam with promises and predictions of the triumph of the Second. Then the New Testament comes; the battle is over, the triumph is won. We are put with the Second Adam, and Christ looks that we should be victorious. But we are never victorious except so far as Christ is our object, when He is before our eyes at each moment, in each difficulty or trial that comes before us here below. When are we happy? When Christ is before our eyes—not when we are looking back to the happiness of yesterday. Satan would have us look back upon past happiness, and perhaps date our blessing upon such or such a day. But it ought not to be so. I am, of course, to have a joyful recollection of all that the Lord shows me, and I shall certainly not forget the first moment of blessing from Him. But how miserable if this only be our comfort and stability now, and our assurance that we shall be with Christ! Nay; it is a living Christ that we have—a Christ that died and is. alive again, and a Christ that would imprint His own character upon us, making us truly great. It is holding fast what Christ has given us that delivers us from littleness, and bolding it fast in Christ Himself.

The Lord grant that, strengthened of His grace, we may be enabled thus to do. Then each word of Christ will have its own power over our souls, will be clothed with His own love; it will come to us not as some great draft upon us, as if the Lord could be enriched by us, save only in such honor to Him as really blesses our own souls. It is the consciousness that we have such blessing, such wealth, such dignity in Christ, which gives and keeps us in the feeling that all that is of this world

would rather detract from us than add anything to us. It is not only that we have got Christ, but that there is nothing but Christ that is a real honor or power or glory to the saint of God. And the bright day will come when Jesus will tell us what He told the disciples, “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.” This was after the discussion of who should be the greatest, after He had before Him the treachery of one disciple, and the unworthy vanity of the others; after it all that He says, “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.” But knowing all that they had been in the past, the trial they had been to Himself, their many weaknesses and failures, yet He puts it as an honor to them, “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.” It was He who had continued with them, who had sustained and kept them in spite of themselves. Yet see how love delights in saying to us, “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.”

The Lord give us then to be steadfast. It is but a little while. Soon the time of our trials and temptations will close. Soon the time of Christ's dishonor in this world will give place to a throne of glory, and every eye shall see Him, and every knee bow before Him. May we be faithful to Him for this little while. Bright will be the remembrance of suffering for Him in His presence forever!

Heads of Psalms: Book 5

(Psa. 107, &C.)

We begin here a new sphere. Israel restored is the occasion of the display of all the characters of God's dealings with the world as to His righteousness and judgment; and, by the introduction of the personal history of Christ in His rejection and exaltation, of deeper principles of His dealings relative to the person of Jesus, as the center of all economy. It is Jewish, but Jewish as to circumstances which concern all mankind.

Thanks to Jehovah characterize its introduction proclaimed by restored Israel, and witness His mercy their well-known song in the end. Verses 2, 3 especially call for this praise in the circumstances of Israel. The psalm itself speaks of the restoration, and, though there was a similar deliverance from Egypt, that shall be nowise mentioned; for they shall not say The Lord liveth who brought them up out of the land of Egypt. “They wandered;” therefore verse 4 I take to be on their return in the latter day; they had been (ver. 10) sitting in darkness; “for he hath broken the gates of brass.” (Ver. 16.) So of their tossings on the sea. From verse 32 is what happens to them after they find their place in the land; and though they are then punished and brought low, yet all iniquity in result shall stop her month. Those who observe and understand these things will, in spite, and even through all the miseries of Israel, as ever, understand the lovingkindness of the Lord. But His dealings are a pattern of instruction for the children of men in these days; and they are called (ver. 31, 32) to execute this praise in Israel, in the assembly joining with them.

In Psa. 108 we have the full political arrangements under the glory of Christ. God is to be exalted; Messiah, as man, addresses God; and the Lord Himself with God making His glory as man the expression of what He is thereto subservient. The Lord among the peoples as chief of Israel for His mercy is above the heavens, and His truth above all seats and ways of authority or appearances which may pass through the heavens. He, even God, is to be exalted, that His beloved, the Messiah, Israel in Him, may be delivered; the right hand of God's power is to be manifested. Verse 7: God answers (Elohim) in His holiness from which He cannot depart—thus generally. Verse 10. Edom is singled out, long and specially hostile (see Obad. 1:1, 1, 3, 7); and Messiah in the name of Israel demands who will go out and bring him into Edom, the center of hostile power (so in many passages). Man's help is now vain; God will do it—God's immutable glory leaving all earthly appearances far behind, and producing its own upon the earth. Israel concludes, thus encouraged, “Through God we shall do valiantly.”

Having in Psa. 107 the providence, and in Psa. 108 the determined glory of God, we have now (Psa. 109; 110) the part of Christ respectively in rejection and heavenly glory, until His manifestation. In Psa. 109, as the poor man entirely and self-emptyingly dependent upon God; but therefore the prey of the treachery and wanton, but proud hostility of the Jews and those who lead them, who were guide to them who took Jesus. The Jews are manifestly noticed as verse 4 and Judas, but both headed up in the wicked man who shall be set over them—the representative of both the Jews and Judas; but after all, it was all the Lord's doing; and then let them curse, but

“bless thou.” Verses 29-31 are faith's estimate as from the Lord's truth of the result.

Psa. 110 We have on this rejection of Messiah, the answer of Jehovah, and Christ recognized in the midst of all this suffering and rejection by His Spirit, even in the mouth of the most exalted of Israel, and of all Israel as Lord. David in Spirit calls him Lord.

Foes He had found plenty—the same as all; for His love they were His adversaries; but He was to sit at the right hand of Jehovah until His enemies were made His footstool. Hereafter the Lord world send the rod of His power out of Zion: He should rule, instead of suffer, among His enemies. His people should be willing, not in the day of His humiliation, but of His power. “The dew of thy youth” is, I apprehend, the progeny given Him in Israel instead of fathers in that day. Moreover, Jehovah both sworn He shall be a priest after the order of Melchizedec. He does not say He is on high—that was not Melchizedec’s place, but a royal priesthood of the Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, though the title of His life is not on high. Further, there is a day of Adonai's wrath as well as power. “He shall smite through kings in the day of his wrath.” He shall in that day judge also among the heathen which shall be His empire, powerful and decisive His judgment. He shall smite not only many, leaving there their carcasses, but the haughty head of a great country. I used to think this Antichrist; but it does not appear to me certain that this is not Gog, for he is exercising apparently his authority rather amongst the Jews than amongst the saints. We may inquire more of both, for both are true, but it is rather, I conceive, Antichrist. Verse 7: He shall be humbled, in dependence on the refreshings of God in the way: therefore shall He lift it up. The other had exalted it, and he shall be brought low. Such is the proposed glory of Messiah as such, as Jehovah's answer to His adversaries' betrayal and humiliation. One cannot exclude Antichrist without further inquiry, however.

The three psalms which follow are the joint Hallelujah upon these things.

In Psa. 111 Messiah leads the chorus, or instructs it rather, of the assembly of His people of the upright. The works of the Lord in providential power for the accomplishment of all the promises of His covenant are the theme—redemption for them, truth for Him—power and judgment. His covenant proved and established also, as commanded forever. It is holy glory proved in it—the fear of Him—the way of understanding despite of all the rebellions of man.

In Psa. 112 the difference of the character and results (as God's part previously) of these fearers of the Lord who delight (for the heart is active in these things) greatly in the Lord's commandments. Here now is the way even of earthly grandeur, but the desire of the wicked shall perish, the dealings of the Lord, the result and character of uprightness, and His fear in man being shown. The results break forth in praise in the chorus of those happy through it. Christ summons them in spirit, thus blessed at their head, to praise the name of Jehovah, the subject of the hallelujah in each; for none is like to Jehovah, the God of that people high above all the heathen and His glory above the heavens. All things in heaven and earth united under His possession, and specially blessing the poor and lowly Israel. This is Psa. 113 Note His name is to be praised to the end of the earth.

Psa. 109 and 110 having brought in the rejection of Messiah by the Jews and His exaltation to the right hand of Jehovah, and so judgment on Antichrist, or at least the head over a great country, on account of His humiliation (it may possibly mean, and more probably, Israel's after enemies, not

Antichrist), then the relation of Jehovah and Israel and what is connected with it. Psa. 114 begins the application and effect of this to the earth—the effect of the presence of Israel's God. It recalls to the earth; to what happened when Israel was first delivered by Him. But Israel was now brought back to refer to God. Their souls were in communion with Him and their minds were so full of Jehovah Elohim that they say Him without mentioning Him. They know Him as their God and conceal His name as it were in a sort of secret triumph as belonging to themselves, and put forth only His works, until having stated them, the psalm calls upon them to triumph before Him, the God of Jacob. There is great beauty and natural power in the structure of this psalm. Of old time this was the case. Israel went out of Egypt; Judah was His sanctuary and Israel His dominion. What happened? How did nature quail before Him, before this power in Israel, before Israel coming forth! What ailed the sea and the mountains? Tremble they now at the presence of Jehovah, the God of Jacob? What joy for Israel! It was the earth, for in Jacob He is in the earth, and when Jacob says Tremble, he still remembers that to him He was a God of grace. He turned the rock into a standing water.

Psa. 115 But though Israel may boast themselves triumphantly, turning to the earth when it looks on high, it can only say, He hath done what pleased Him. “Not to us, not to us, O Jehovah,” the expression not merely of humble consciousness but of righteous desire. “To thy name give glory;” but His name is identified, for He has identified it, with them: “for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake,” for thus His name was manifested towards Israel. If only truth, then must Israel have been rejected, for they had crucified their Messiah as well as broken their law, but the promises of Jehovah must not fail because man does; and therefore in His inscrutable wisdom He brings in by mercy the accomplishment of His truth, and when (instead of going about to establish their own righteousness, they stumble at the stumblingstone) they take mercy as their only and just hope, then the truth is re-established according to God's own promises and heart, and Jesus is owned as the way of it; for ■■■■■ and ■■■■■ came by Him and, though rejected, will be established with greater additional splendor and glory by Him. This then was now different—a ground for Israel, not the law. The law was given by Moses—that was their righteousness. But they had failed, utterly failed. Such is the ground Israel rests on then, and the question can really be raised between God in Jacob and the heathen acting in scornful despite of their old sorrows and present abasement, saying, Where is He? The answer is of faith. Though Jesus may not yet be publicly manifested, yet by the Spirit of Christ in the midst of them, “our God is in the heavens,” and as to all the prosperity of the Gentiles and their abasement, they say, as Jesus on the non-repentance of Israel, “He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.” The heathen idols are nothing (compare Isaiah from chapter 50, where the question is raised and the humiliation of Christ also brought in) and so they that trust in them. Then the Spirit of Christ thereon turns and addresses itself to Israel, “O Israel, trust in Jehovah,” and asserts also the mercy—He is their helper; and then the promise of millennial blessing from verse 14; but Jewish and earthly then opened. Verses 17, 18 are full of blessing, but blessing for Israel on earth.

As in Psa. 115, the Spirit of Christ entered into the confidence of Israel on the footing to them of mercy, so in Psa. 116 into the sorrows in sympathy. Then as mercy was to them merely, it begins “to us;” here being their sorrows, it begins at once, “I love the Lord,” though in answer to a cry, for He cried for them (i.e., in the world); and was just the One that did, taking their sorrows. Present salvation was the point, when only faith in the Lord could enable him to speak—such was the

persecution. Death so wrought in him (not θ■νατος where this is quoted, as the portion of the remnant partaking of the sufferings of Christ; but ν■κρωσις) but here still referring to the Jews' portion. “I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living,” which the Lord as amongst the Jews sought, “if it had been possible;” but it was not, “for sin was in the world.” The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die—a man must be born again. But the apostle uses it in the energy of the Spirit, when the sufferings of Christ abounded in him, always bearing about, &c. And after all, if even bitter things were reserved for them, the hairs of their head were all numbered. Satan could do nothing unpermitted (and thus for glory and sowing precious seed of faith, showing them there was a better resurrection, so that with us men could be baptized for the dead), for precious in the sight of the Lord was the death of His saints. He did not lightly permit it. Oh for faith to go straight on in this confidence, not fearing them which can kill the body! And if we have to say, “All men are liars,” still speaking because we believe, because we trust in the living God, we shall soon say with Paul, “Thou hast loosed my bands.” “I am thy servant” (not to their enemies). He hath delivered us from so great a death, and will (though life was despaired of), for precious in the sight of Jehovah was the death of His chosen one. Specially will this be manifested in the latter day for the remnant; in the land of the living will they walk before the Lord. The flesh of the elect will be saved; for their sakes the terrible days will be shortened, and the vows of the Lord will be paid in the presence of His people (i.e., the Spirit of Christ in and as the Head of the people, whom when thus persecuted He calls “me” in like manner). “In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee” —for it is addressed as a present thing— “O Jerusalem.” The union between the Church and Christ, and the Jewish remnant and Christ, is different: we being as His body above, and therefore in a heavenly manner being one spirit; the other, as their Head and standing for them in present blessing and manifested, yet still completely taking their cause as His own, and in His Spirit entirely one with them; and therefore in this sense the erased passage alluded to and the Apostle Paul's quotation, I believe, has its force; the latter however was during life, and so with the remnant. Light is here also shown in the glory out of the remnant of Jacob. As dew, the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, a more general expression (John baptized could do that), and the outpouring of the Spirit. (See 2 Cor. 6:9; Psa. 44:22; Rom. 8:36; 1 Cor. 15:31.) The practical connection of the then Jewish remnant with those of the latter day and those with Christ, may be further searched out, for it clears up many things; in this also Matt. 24 is involved. We do not attach sufficient importance to the remnant in this character. The Lord looks at it especially.

We must remark that Psa. 116 is a psalm of thanksgiving, and, on the principle recognized above. He does not love the Lord as under the law but as first loved—as for deliverance because heard when judgment and evil were upon his soul. Christ leads this thanksgiving or return of heart to Jehovah, saying, our God is merciful. (Ver. 5.) It is the thanksgiving cry for deliverance producing love: and love, a voice of praise and thanksgiving in remembrance of their estate. The vows are now to be paid, and they can be paid in the midst of Jerusalem, for the deliverance is wrought. (See Psa. 42:3, 4, and the psalms there.) Then they are under the sorrow. Here the Spirit of Christ puts Himself in the place of deliverance. Then it was the people we have heard, and Christ the object as King. Here He Himself leads, as a matter too of individual joy to His people. “I love Jehovah.” This makes the position quite different. Ever near and a matter of affection and intimacy because of what was wrought, and Christ intimate with Jehovah in union, but as helped, and the people having put Himself in their place, His hand laid on both. This makes this last Psalm (116) more blessed. It is His own Spirit rejoicing in the deliverance as one of the people, and so saying

“our God.” The Apostle Paul quotes both these passages (2 Corinthians and Rom. 8). There is an analogous exercise of the Spirit in us. We may look at Christ as taking us as united to Himself, and so presenting us before God; and then in the highest perfection and place before Him, and also as in us looking up toward Him and saying “our.” The Spirit realizes our union, and then all is liberty and joy because for us accomplished. The Spirit realizes our position and looks up to Him alone there, saying “our;” and here is the difference of the remnant there. Now, or in the apostolic days, when we speak of union, we speak of glory, and perfection, and rest; whereas in the suffering we are substitutes for Christ in the world, though it be only by union we can go through; and we say, as it is written, “I believed,” &c.— “we also” (and therefore adds positive resurrection de facto as to the direct testimony; whereas He says, “I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living,” and the bands are loosed—the power is shown. (2 Cor. 1.) Whereas the sufferings being before them as their portion before they find Christ, He comes down as it were, and enters into them, and says, “I;” and thus, while there is a strong connection, there is a real difference. The moment it was a mere fact, and Christ looked at as an object, it could be taken up directly, as it is written, “for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are appointed” —this was common to both.

In Psa. 117 and 118 the results are fully brought out.

In Psa. 117 we have all the nations called into the blessing and praise of Israel's deliverance. It is still the mercy and truth of Jehovah. Jerusalem having now been made a center, they are called around; the possession of blessing in mercy begets the spirit of blessing. Though once forbidding to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, because they rejected mercy, filling up their sins, for wrath was come upon them, εἰς τέλος. Now they had tasted mercy, and they can say to the nations, Praise the Lord, for He is merciful to us. Here note, too, the greatness of the mercy is felt and first put; for so Israel comes in, brought in under mercy, and then the truth (they being morally restored) is proved to have endured and been forever. They could not find it under their lie, yet their lie had abounded to the enduring glory of His truth: under mercy they had come into this. How deep is the wisdom of God The next Psalm (118) takes up mercy as enduring forever—not merely the sense of the present greatness of it. But when they saw how God's truth had abided in spite of their sin, they see the incomparable patience of God—His own character celebrated in them as of mercy forever. Israel, Aaron, and all may now say, His mercy endureth forever. As the Lord's going before or amongst the people had been announced to the earth in Psa. 115, so here we have the fellowship of Christ with the national, especial sorrows of Israel in that day, and thus bringing Jehovah to be with them. (Ver. 4, 5, 7.) All the nations had gathered together against Jerusalem, but Christ was there with them in His heart in the trouble. With Him Jehovah could be, for He trusted in Him and in His name He destroyed them. The adversary was sore to make Him fall, but Jehovah was with Him. Lastly, Jehovah had chastened Him sore, but He had not given Him over unto death. There were the three points (and so known in an individual soul), the nations around compassing Him, the adversary thrusting sore, and, lastly, the real secret deepest in sorrow, yet the key to all deliverance in it—Jehovah had chastened Him sore. Ver. 14-17 is the triumph against the adversary, because the Lord must be exalted, trusting in Jehovah's name, of which this is still the celebration. Jehovah's name must be exalted above all these things. Verse 17 is Jewish confidence clearly. This psalm is a remarkable summary of the identification of Jesus and all the circumstances of the Jews in the latter day; and then, in verse 19, Christ's victory through trust in Jehovah in all circumstances opens to Him the gates of righteousness (now this

more deeply true, even in the resurrection).

Heads of Psalms: Book 5

The division of this closing Psa. 118 (closing, i.e., as to this subject) is this: first, the celebration of the truth for Israel. Compare 1 Chron. 16:34 and the structure of that psalm very particularly; 2 Chron. 5:13; 7:3; Ezra 3:11; Psa. 106; 107; 136 The psalm in 1 Chron. 16 is a summary of the heads of what Jews are interested in as the ground, exhibition, and resting-place of confidence in the latter-day, but there only the blessing and prayer, for it supposes the first step of blessings in accomplishment, and accordingly can rehearse together the statement, “Mercy endureth forever,” and omit the intermediate miseries. Then the summons to each sort of persons to use the song, verse 5, Messiah for Israel and trust in Jehovah, and that answered to verse 9. Verse 10, the circumstances of Israel in the latter day as to the nations. Verse 13, the adversary's part, this Satan, and by Antichrist, but the adversary. Verse 13, the Lord's hand in it—chastening, but preserving. Verses 10-13, therefore, is in a manner a common subject. Verse 19, Messiah takes the advance, being in this now living, accepted position, and then it is the Lord's relation with Israel in connection with Messiah, not Messiah's connection with Israel in respect of the evil—that was once true. Messiah's grace in subjecting Himself to their sorrows in this, though they esteemed Him stricken, is the way by which He can take them (now again at the last recognizing Him) with Him into the blessedness which (as their head, as the righteous Son) He is going into. The Lord's own use of it makes its force and application manifest. I question whether it should not be (ver. 27) Jehovah is El (the mighty God).

Psa. 119 This exceedingly beautiful and well-known psalm appears to me to be this: other psalms testify of the circumstances surrounding the remnant as having the Spirit of Christ by that Spirit; this of their state, the Spirit of Christ in them expressing that state, the law written in their hearts, the judgments being executed; so that there is what shows the Lord's interference, so that the sense of this is expressed, but not yet deliverance finally from the oppressor, their estimate of their whole condition, under and as connected with their circumstances, the mind of the Spirit of Christ in them. It is most interesting in this point of view. All the holy yet humbled thoughts and feelings of this poor people expressed in the now returning righteous confidence of their delight in God, breaking forth to God, who has put His law in their hearts when He is interfering for their deliverance. Its moral depth too is admirable and blessed in instruction and joy, and our delight in His holy will (the expression, and commandments, and holy roots of His will); for we know His law is spiritual and we carnal. The condition, however, prophetically in strict application is a Jew, a godly Jew, in that day.

From Psa. 120 to Psa. 134 is confessedly one series of psalms and ought to be viewed together; they are the songs of Zion, describing, if I may so speak, the process of their restoration. It supposes them to be already altogether in the latter-day times and that in a very definite character. Indeed generally they are retrospective of its earlier character, and, to say the least, commence with the certainty of the destruction of Antichrist, and that is entered into rather by a retrospective operation of the Spirit. It is on the whole of it rather the restoration of Israel—all Israel: that is the subject (the people leaning fully on Jehovah as one they knew and that distinctly, and He known and recognized, and they knowing Him and openly owning Him as their resource not in any uncertainty of position). It has more the character of a recital of what they had been enduring than

the expression of those who had none that cared for their souls.

“In my distress I called on Jehovah, and he heard.” This first psalm tells the cry under Antichrist. The judgment on the false tongue for deceit was his, and characterized him; as Christ was the Truth. The next is the sorrow of sojourning among hostile powers, much connected with Gog. Kedar would come and Mesech before the last capture of Jerusalem, with whom they had no wish for war, but who were men of violence—were not godly men, still less had God for their habitation. They were weary of their spirit.

Psa. 121 They will look around them to the hills for help. Whence should it come? Ah there is the well-known truth for Israel! My help comes from Jehovah, who hath made everything man could trust in. He keeps Israel. He never slumbers or sleeps—a secure guardian: no power of evil shall smite them. The Lord shall preserve their going out and coming in from this time forth for evermore. The first of the two, the evil to which they were liable; the second, their sure, safe, and secure refuge, and that forever.

The happy results in worship (the third part of the sentiments of the delivered remnant, the happiness of Christ in them) is in Psa. 122. It is ever Israel in all this. These three psalms are rather prefatory, such as will be used, but retrospective, as I have said, not historical. From Psa. 123 we enter more into detail. They respect the full restoration, in one form or another, though it may not be viewed as accomplished in them all. Psa. 122 is the joy of Christ's Spirit in the fruits of it in others in actually going up; but all is restored joy of Israel, and verse 4 in assembled thanksgiving of worship in the temple; verse 5, judgment—His delight in the place of judgment. The Lord's heart who once wept here goes out in yearnings over His beloved Jerusalem; and, calling to prayer for its peace, pronounces peace upon it. Two great motives too, animating to the brethren and glorifying to God, draw it out. Them He still is not ashamed to call brethren and companions, and having so blessedly named, He (at once introducing them into full connection with the glory and blessing) says, “Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek to do thee good.” Nothing could be added to this.

Psa. 123 The intercourse is all here entirely with Jehovah and expresses their position and feelings towards Him. It is this rather than the circumstances that are entered into. They are occupied with themselves and Him, because with Him. The Lord is looked at as dwelling out of the reach of circumstances where evil really was. Then out of the reach of circumstances the believer could direct his heart, and then there was the ground of patient faith. As Psa. 119 gave the position of the Jewish remnant as regards law in that day, so this as regards faith. It was their condition as to their heart that was in question or expression. They wait on the Lord their God, who is in the heavens, as the eyes of a maiden or a servant to her master and mistress—helpless, and who have no business, till they get the word of their master, until He have mercy upon them. Patience, submission, the consciousness of no desert, yet the confidence of mercy—this characterized this waiting people. Then their sorrow and despisedness was an occasion for mercy—a plea; and so it is in their mouth, and so ever when one is in this disposition; so in the plea of this confidence of mercy they have to wait. They have nothing else to say but this is strong in the mercy and lovingkindness of the Lord. There were others at ease and proved they were associated with, and dependent on, the Lord. This was the blessed, holy, and submissive position of heart of the remnant. This was the perfection of faith in their position, the expression of the Spirit

of Christ which enters into all our conditions. In all their afflictions, He was afflicted.

Psa. 124 It was well they did trust in Jehovah. For if Jehovah Himself had not been on their side, in man all help was utterly lost. Men rose up against them, and the proud waters had gone over their soul, but it was the occasion of their being able surely to say, Jehovah Himself was for them, for there was none else, and to Him they had looked. Such is the effect of extreme and hopeless trouble—in Jehovah's deliverance, the clear certainty that Jehovah is for them. This Israel might now say—a long last word in the revolt of the sorrowing but still loved people—Jehovah is on our side. “Blessed be Jehovah” was now therefore their word. The snare is broken, they are delivered, and they could say now with experience, “our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.” This great and hopeless trouble thus becomes the certainty of Jehovah’s being with them.

Psa. 125 Here is the celebration of their distinctive confidence. They can now speak about it in the maturity of peace rather than the joyous excitement of deliverance, when they were just saved from being a prey to their teeth. They that trust in Jehovah shall be even as mount Zion which abideth, for the peace of mount Zion is now a witness of deliverance—the same mount Zion as of old, the seat of the gracious counsels of God uncovered. They trust in the Lord—have the same portion as the mountains round Jerusalem. Verse 2, Jehovah is around His people, and that henceforth even forever; but then it was a distinctive blessing. It was judgment, the rod of the wicked, and then came against them: it should not rest on the lot of the righteous. There was no peace to the wicked; and this applied to the wicked among Israel. It was not a distinction merely between Israel and the nations, but a distinction in the deliverance of the righteous remnant; so the prayer is for them, the good and upright in heart. As for those that turn aside to crooked ways, Jehovah gives them a portion with the wicked; but there will not be now any more. Therefore, numbered with Israel, peace shall rest on Israel; now accepted and righteous before God, the righteous remnant becomes the nation.

Psa. 126 This restoration of the captivity of Zion is now specially noticed. The very heathen were astonished, and noticed the hand of the Lord for them, and the echo of praise came from His people: “He hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.” How simple and eloquent this word! Verse 4 takes the restoration of the captivity of Zion as the fullness of the restoration of the whole people. Verse 5 is the joyful experience of Israel, the humbled and sorrowful remnant grieved and laid low, but with godly sorrow now reaped with joy. But there was One above all who had sown precious seed in Israel, and in love as well as righteousness, and in both continued. He had been a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, their faces hid from Him; but now He filled His bosom with the sheaves, for though sown in tears, the seed was indeed precious seed, and the fruit sweet to His taste, and the joy of His labor of love—now He reaped it. The husbandman had had long patience for it, and waited the early and the latter rain; but now the precious blessed fruit came. First laboring. He now partook of the fruits. He came again rejoicing.

Psa. 127 This is for Solomon, in which character the Lord builds the house; and we have the expression of the experience of the utter folly of all carnal Jewish expectations and efforts. They might have built the house, and great stones and buildings be there: it was in vain. The Lord did not own it. They might have watched the city, but they had awaked in vain: all had been in vain for Israel till the Lord arose and had mercy. These Jewish blessings flow forth as upon earth in a

gratuity given us—blessing in the Lord's peace.

Psa. 128 It is the fearers of Jehovah that enjoy this blessing; yea, even to children's children. All the associations of their hearts would be satisfied. It was out of Zion the Lord would bless them, and they would see the good of Jerusalem all the days of their life. How of the Lord—and yet how truly earthly, and of man, human nature—these blessings are!

Psa. 129 particularly takes up the enemies, these desolators. Many a time had they done it. And so indeed it was from the days of Cushan-risathaim onward, till Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon broke the bones thereof; and after, in their yet worse and more terrible (because more real) desolation, their back bad been plowed in and long furrows made. They had just to lie down and be treated at the very will of the enemy who had enslaved them. Yet, wonderful mystery, they had not prevailed against them. But there was One who said He was for them—One who in all their affliction was afflicted. His Spirit now taught them to speak in the recognition of the ways of God; and then comes the sum, for Israel through mercy now stood in righteousness. The Lord is righteous; He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked. Their character was now brought out: they hate Zion, with which the Lord in grace was now identified. But there was not blessing from God or man upon them, when Israel should blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit. No mower would fill his hand with them, nor any goer-by say, “The blessing of the Lord be upon you.”

In Psa. 130 we have Him who truly took this place; and though true of Israel, by Him and in His Spirit casting from the depths His soul on the Lord, and therein leading Israel into all the blessing of its forgiveness. This was the true hope of sinful Israel—the new ground, not under the law at all, and then looking for no other hope but waiting for Him; and so in verses 7, 8 His Spirit fully teaches them. The place of the cry is the leading point here. The place acknowledged Christ's Spirit, who had been in it, taking His place with them in it, and putting loved yet poor Israel into the place of God's thoughts and its true comeliness in it—acknowledgment, faith—but that in mercy. His answer (i.e., the answer of the Spirit of Christ) is in verses 7, 8.

His place of holy subjection and littleness is brought out in Psa. 131; and so was the place Christ had taught them and taken. He knew all things, but He had put Himself into the place of quiet subjection to God's will, and therein was in the way of blessing. The things which were revealed He took up and taught to Israel; and there Israel found and would find its blessing. The Spirit is the Spirit of all learning and instruction; but it is not the character of the Church's language, but of the quiet child-like subjection of Israel, entering as an obedient child into the place of its hope.

[Psa. 132 First of all David's (i.e. Christ's) sufferings are the basis of all. Next, it is sovereign grace, for responsibility, even under the mercy declared through Moses, was closed when the ark was taken captive by the Philistines. There could be no day of atonement, no blood on the mercy-seat. Ichabod was written on all. God had delivered His strength into captivity, His glory into the enemies' hands. Sovereign grace raised up Samuel the prophet, and then David who brought the ark not into the tabernacle at all, but to Mount Zion, which was thus the seat of sovereign grace in power as contrasted with Sinai. God is called on to arise into His rest; for He will rest in His love. It is His rest we are to enter into, when His love will be satisfied and His nature perfectly met through the fruits of it as in Eph. 4:4, 5. Christ will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Hence it is God's rest and of the ark of His strength—a new thing. It is not, “Rise up O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered,” and “Return O Lord, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel.” But then

man's (i.e., the saints') rest is only in this. “Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.” His rest, his heart's rest, could only be in rest of God perfectly glorified. Here we find the rest of the saint's heart, in its desires identified with God's, so that it can have no rest till He has rest and be perfectly glorified: a vital principle, the effect of being partakers of the divine nature. And this, we shall see, brings one in this blessed way into God's counsels, as it is written, “Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor that he should instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ—the Holy Ghost by the word leading us into all truth. (Compare Ex. 15; 29:46.) Our rest is entering into God's rest—an infinite blessing.

But the desire is right according to man, the answer is according to God: the desire is right according to the divine nature and ways, but the blessing according to the riches of grace. The desire (ver. 8) is that Jehovah should arise into His rest, He and the ark of His strength. For the strength and faithful covenant-working of God enter into rest when all is accomplished. The answer (ver. 13, 14) is, “The Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.” It is more than asked, clearly more. The heart led of God has been brought to desire what is God's desire and the object of His election.

So the desire (ver. 9) is that Jehovah's priests be clothed with righteousness, as John the Baptist's father; and the answer (ver. 16) is, I will also clothe her priests with salvation—the full, final deliverance of God. The desire is right: righteousness becomes them; the answer is from God, and becomes Him in the power of His grace. The desire again (ver. 9) is, that His saints may shout for joy. All right: the renewed heart must desire the prosperity and joy of God's chosen. And God will give it abundantly (ver. 16): “her saints shall shout aloud for joy.”

Remark another thing. In the desire they are Jehovah's priests, and Jehovah's saints— “thy priests,” “thy saints.” It is so as to “the rest:” and as to the rest it is repeated (compare verses 8 and 14), but as to Zion, This is my rest; and this is what we want: nothing else will do or would be rest. But as to the priests and saints, the answer does not say “thy,” but “her,” that is, Zion's. They are His; but so perfectly does God own the complete association of His people with Him in rest and blessing, that the priests which are His He calls hers (for they do belong to Zion), and the priests which are His to be hers. This in the identity of the rest is of unequaled beauty.

I have omitted the desire (ver. 10) not to turn away the face of God's anointed. The answer (ver. 17, 18) also is more: the born of David is to bud; a lamp is there ordained for him, and his crown shall flourish on him. That is, He goes beyond the wish. But note it is “there” —in Zion. Christ literally is King there, as in Psa. 2. There too it was first sung” His mercy endureth forever;” for it had blessed Israel after all, and in spite of all, and found in the end of His responsibility the occasion and beginning of His perfect grace. We see the outgoings of His goodness in that which He will do for Zion.]

Psa. 133—The person of the high priest represented the whole people. But the power and anointing of the Holy Ghost in the fragrance of grace was that which united the whole people; so exactly in Christ—one Spirit—one body. They shall in that day appoint themselves one Head; they shall not be two peoples any more in the land, and this not only in form but in Spirit and unity of blessing. Hermon caught in its lofty head the dew or produced it; but it fell in the central place of

divine blessing, thus ministering the power of unity. Hermon was called Zion, but it was with ■ not ■. This seems to be Zion as we ordinarily understand, where the Lord commanded His blessing and life for evermore. It was the place of grace, the hill of grace. Though Hermon, whose head was in heaven as it were, was the attractive place of dew, it was the dew of Hermon, but it fell on Zion. The Spirit will be poured on them from on high, and Ephraim will no more envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim.

Psa. 134 Zion thus established, praises rise, Men by night in the sanctuary at peace there, His servants, stand in His courts; and as once the day only brought clearer light on their sorrow, now the night itself is awake with the praises of Jehovah who has restored them and given them cause for praise day and night; and He who has been the center and power of this blessing—David is now in Zion which the Lord hath chosen. They bless out of this seat of grace and royalty. The sanctuary owns the royalty—the seat and place of blessing. He who has made heaven and earth, the Jehovah of His people, the Creator of all things is in this power called to bless Him out of Zion, the place of grace and desire to the Lord. It is not Sinai now; Psa. 132-134 all center in Zion. The Lord hath chosen Zion—commanded blessing there—blesses Messiah out of Zion. Surely the people is restored now. The priest blesses Jehovah and calls for benediction from Jehovah on him from this seat of royal grace. Thus is Christ placed, as the remembrance of David and his afflictions, who had no rest till a place was found out for the Lord. Heaven and earth the compass of heaven, but Zion the seat of peculiar blessing; Psa. 133, especially priestly blessing, as Psa. 132, the king. Psa. 134 brings both in pronouncing and ministering praise and the blessing.

Heads of Psalms: Book 5

Psa. 135 This and the following psalm seem to me to be the praise to which the songs of degrees have led. Jehovah is celebrated, the name of Jehovah, and is called to be by the servants of Jehovah. They stood now in the house of Jehovah, in the courts of the house of their (Israel's) God. Jehovah had chosen Jacob for Himself. Israel was His peculiar treasure. He was great, and Israel's Adon above all gods. Whatever Jehovah pleased, He did with universal power, as in creation and providence, and that power in delivering Israel, judging their enemies, exercising divine and righteous authority over them in favor of His people, and using that righteous sovereignty in preparing a place for an heritage to them. Verses 13, 14 remarkably take in the record of the name of promise to the fathers given to Moses, as in Ex. 3; and of sovereign mercy in their utter destitution, Deut. 32 The heathen are therein shown their vanity. Verses 19-21 take up the full Israelitish located blessing according to the ordinance of God in Israel, not His in them, but their return to Him as blessed. At least they are so called in, and in spirit summon their companies, and close with the utterance of the praise itself with a final hallelujah as it began.

Psa. 136 takes up the well-known hallelujah, Israel's chorus, “for His mercy endureth forever.” The present occasion of their praises proved that mercy endured forever, and that that mercy had really gone on unceasingly, and had preserved them (through their rebellions), and remembered them, as Deuteronomy bad said in their low estate, redeeming them from the hand of their enemies. It still takes up the almighty sovereignty of God-Jehovah, and takes up the same elements of power, but adds Israel's sense of mercy, and that, its having endured forever, enabling it to take up this very praise now. “He remembered us in our low estate.” Then indeed it is that praise really comes out from a humble spirit, and mercy known now, and known in

unchanging favor in personal blessing, yet more glorious and lovely, because a love which flowed from itself, not caused by the object, is added to the praises as the sinner's only basis for them all. It is a beautiful expression of this; and the mind, thus taught, recounts them with happy particularity—power, wisdom, skill, grandeur of governances in the objects formed in their proper order, judicial and mighty power, in deliverance to the people, for the Creator looks at them, and they are immediately associated with creation in its blessing. He did everything in controlling power over creation for them. Distinctive in judgment, Israel passed through, Pharaoh overthrown. He led them with unceasing care when there was no way, and smote their enemies when they would have checked their entrance into their inheritance, giving their possessions to them His people, and after all redeemed them from their low estate, for indeed His mercy endured forever; and then blessed in providence all the race of man and the animal creation too, for to this His mercy reached—the God of heaven whose mercy endured forever. It is not here “of earth” merely, for it is for them as much to look up as the Gentiles who had the earth, and the Church, apt to think God did not mind the earth, to look down and own Him the God of the earth. Messiah's reign in that day shall prove Him gathering both their dislocated elements—failing Israel on earth, and a failing Church for heaven—into perfection and stability.

This closes, I think, the rising up by degrees to the Lord's house, where this or these are sung. What follows takes a wider scope and yet looks back to the interval which has been entirely omitted in these two psalms—discipline and sorrow and humiliation for sin by the way the people visited.

The former two took up merely the land in their introduction into it, and looks at them then in their low estate, and this, whatever its cause, was looked at as an object of compassion. Mercy forever was the word, and they could truly sing it then. Circumstances are entered into here, connected with visitations and sorrows in strange lands and deliverances there, and all that was associated with Israel's state when far from Jehovah, and Lo-ammi indeed really written upon it—quite another and different aspect of things.

Psa. 137 This therefore gives an important character to this psalm—the period of Israel's rejection, and the impossibility of praising the Lord in such circumstances. It is the Spirit thus in the remnant. Faith put to the associations of God's glory with Israel, but for that reason incapable of uttering the Lord's songs. They might (with a sort of holy boldness in God's own principles and holiness, yet with bowing of heart) say, as elsewhere— “Praise waiteth for thee in Zion.” Jehovah had His own law, His own place. This He had made Israel's: were they to forget this? It would have been slighting His favor, renouncing the specialty of His mercy. Babylon they might get—they had got into: their sins had brought them there; but there they must at least hang up their harps, weeping because for them the place of this world's careless and apostate glory. For indeed, if in sorrow, they were identified with the place of God's glory in the earth. Their portion, if the Spirit of righteousness was in them at all, was sorrow then. Well, the Lord too was very sore displeased with the heathen that were at ease. He was but a little angry, and they had helped forward the affliction. For good He suffered His people to be afflicted; for righteousness too now, but still they were beloved. Now the testimony to their righteousness in sorrow is rendered to them by the Spirit there. And this is the blessed point of this psalm; even it carried away captive, there were those of whom Zion's sorrows were the sorrows, and, in spirit, Jerusalem, the Urim of God's peace, preferred above their chief joy. They could say when free—this in the truth of the spirit of their

state then. So shall it be in the latter day. All the intervening sorrow of a separate people in judgment is witnessed and owned of the Spirit of God. Then we have the three great powers of the world or cities that concerned Zion; but they were Zion's songs, not to be sung but there. “Babylon” (if it could be said, for judgment; full judgment was not yet come about) “who art to be destroyed” —haughty evil. He who would be blessed is he who executed the judgment on it. Then there was a third party, haters of the Lord, who would be found liars; implacable enemies of Jerusalem, hating it just because it was the Lord's, and they were ruiners of it; but as they dealt thus in the day of Jerusalem, the Lord would remember them. We see thus that deliverance from Babylon (and so we may add its fall) precedes its destruction; and before they can triumph in the setting-up of Zion, they can, as delivered, and with the remnant's feelings, speak of their previous position as one that had been. Though Babylon was not destroyed, and Edom yet to come up in remembrance of judgment before God, Jerusalem was still to be spoken of as one remembered, not forgotten—not as one which they possessed and dwelt in peace as their glory. But Babylon is spoken of as one remembered too, and yet in existence. There they had done so and so, and he would be happy that destroyed her; and Edom, still viewed as in power, to be visited of the Lord. It is thus a very instructive and pointed psalm, as well as exceedingly beautiful in its spirit and strength of association with the Lord in the sense of the appointed place of His favor, blessing, honor, and glory. The Lord would remember Edom; but Babylon was to have, it seems, some instrumental rewarder of her ways. The judgment on these two closes the psalm.

Psa. 138 then takes up the praise before the whole earth—the Lord's word. His faithfulness in truth was magnified above all His name. Mercy might have done it and be sung, but faithfulness to His promise in spite of all man's unfaithfulness (see ver. 1-3) now shone out in all its glory, and they that blessed themselves in earth would bless themselves in the God of truth. This is a glorious position—the position of the strength of the Spirit, while its tender mercy is true too to the needy and in our infirmities. But this was risen above in His strength now. The holy temple was then to be worshipped toward. Every promise had come out in its own glory in spite of the utter unfaithfulness and utter failure of man. It was true the kings of the earth had not yet come to bow to the glory of the Lord, or yet sing consequently in the ways of Jehovah, and Israel had therefore to praise before the gods. Still this in one sense exalted Jehovah's strength. All was not as yet brought into the peaceful blessedness of acknowledged rule; but Jehovah had appeared of Israel's side, so that they had that glory before al the princes of the earth. Israel had cried in the day of his trouble and the Lord had strengthened him, and now all the kings of the earth would have to bear the words of Jehovah's mouth and would sing, for indeed it would be and was blessing in the ways of Jehovah; for great (the delivered one now can say) is the glory of Jehovah. Such is the substance of the psalm as regards the remnant, as it is in the period after the destruction of Antichrist in the time of Jacob's trouble, the first great act of judgment in the person of the associated oppressor of the remnant, before the earth is subjected or its kings have learned to bow before Jehovah, the faithful God of His people in blessing. Still the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the great binge of this psalm, and when the mighty one of death was against Him in His entering into the time of Jacob's trouble, yet with Israel against Him, associated with him; so that it could be said, This is your hour and the power of darkness. He was strengthened in His soul with strength and met in His own blessed peaceful dignity their apostate rulers that stood up against Him—was heard in that He feared, and could take the ground of resurrection against all that was against Him; and so in the strength of divine favor could in blessed perfect obedience take the cup and thus seal the

certainty of this submission of all to Him in the strength of the Lord over all evil, even in the power of death. We have then in the last three verses the three great aspects of Jehovah's ways—high, but having respect to the lowly; reviving His true loved faithful servant, though such may be in trouble; stretching forth His hand against the wrath of His enemies, perfecting that which concerns His faithful servant. “For his mercy endureth forever,” and this it is has made way for the glory and manifestation of His truth according to the depth of His wisdom and unsearchable judgments. In Christ indeed, and so of all promises in Him, His word is magnified above all His name—His promises, “Yea and Amen” in Him. Blessed be He who is both Lord and servant, David's son and David's Lord, Israel's sufferer and Israel's Savior (the same love making Him one, that He might be the other in divine perfectness).

Psa. 139 The day of Christ's trouble having been thus introduced, the mystery of the Church according to divine righteousness, and searching all things even according to death, is brought in. But the Church being brought out of it stands of course above and beyond the reach of it in judgment, for it stands in the power of it according to the favor due to the person of Christ, and which in Him has raised the Church out of the full result of the judicial fullness of divine righteousness against all that divine righteousness could search; and if it reached heaven or the power of death, the two extremes of that righteousness, it found it in one in perfection, in the other in suffering its full exaction in Him who thus, in it for the Church, and the Church in Him, fills all things. (Ver. 17, 18.) The purpose of these thoughts concerning Christ and His glory is referred to, and then, consequent on this, the judgment of the wicked in vindication of His honor (who opposed and rejected Him) and that righteousness may prevail (for in truth His soul was perfect, though He went into the dust of death in its hatred of evil); and so the Church in Him. And thus the searching eye of divine righteousness, desired for it, is disciplinarian and directive—not judicial as to the acceptance of the person. This rests the whole question on higher ground—the highest and fullest ground yet taken in this book as to the manner of its communication to us, and our portion in it. It is the mystery of the Church, but hidden here. It is not, I will praise thee for I am searched; but, “I will praise thee for I am made.” The whole Epistle of Ephesians is the Spirit's unfolding and applying according to the full light of an ascended Savior; the force of this psalm is a commentary on it according to the light of the gospel, and its actual accomplishment. Verse 18 is restoration—His place in spite of death.

Psa. 140 The sacred people being righteous and searched, and the wicked to be judged and slain—these in their relative condition are brought in. And passing on to the condition of the Jewish people, to speak the words of Christ among the remnant as taking up their cause in that day, it looks for deliverance from them on the earth, possibly in the evil man noticing the last enemy rising from within them, especially the Antichrist; and in the violent, those who seek their own will from without against the men of peace and righteousness. Verses 12, 13 show the sure confidence of faith in their circumstances. The psalm, however, is one of character in these He sought to be delivered from—the evil ones and enemies (not designation).

Psa. 141 makes a scene deserving investigation, and enters into the position of the righteous one amongst the people—his being thrown entirely on the Lord for keeping righteousness, so that he may have no part with the wicked, willing that the righteous should smite him. He will pray for them in their trials, though they rebuke and reprove him. All he wants is righteousness; but he desires to be preserved from the vanities of the wicked. Snares they had laid around, but he was securing

himself to God, and desiring this only practical acceptance with Him, Jehovah, and to Him only therefore he looks—instructive lesson. Though willing to be smitten by the righteous, verse 6 implies still an owning of them, but their liability to heavy chastisements; but as he prayed in their calamities, for a blessing is in it, in the cluster; so when chastened and overthrown, they would hear his words, for indeed they were sweet He knew it before the Lord in the day of visitation: there would be hearkeners. Thus the Spirit of Christ took up the people of Israel found in Jerusalem; as for the enemies, it was deliverance from and judgment. In verse 7 He looks at the relentless evil and violence—murder committed against the nations. He calls them in that—in spirit He loves them still; still the individual believers—for it was now on earth a question—on earth would escape, while the wicked would fall into their own nets. Look at David in the time of Saul, and there is much to guide in the understanding of the psalm. Prayer is the position in which he puts himself, praying the Lord to put a watch over him.

Psa. 142 Here we find the loneliness of Christ and consequently of His Spirit in the remnant; but Jehovah was the refuge in loneliness; and where all failed of man, he did not; and the voice of groaning was the glory of the Lord's only faithfulness. The Spirit of the Righteous and Holy One was overwhelmed. So of His yechidim in the latter day. But Jehovah knew His path, terrible, troubled, and trying as it was; and no man would know Him, not only of the peoples none were with Him, but none of His people. And so shall iniquity abound in that day: so are the saints ever tried. Look at Paul— “no man stood by me; but the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me.” See the account of these very latter days in Matt. 24. But when his faithfulness was proved, the righteous would compass Him about. This then is desertion, while his persecutors stronger than he pressed on him, i.e., as to the land of the living.

Then in Psa. 143, it is not solitariness as to trial, but judgment that is the question, that the Lord might be with Him—this between His soul and God. Trials existed—his life was smitten down to the ground—his spirit was overwhelmed within him, and his heart desolate; but judgment could not be met by man. No flesh living should be justified. This is, indeed, just what we have learned by the Holy One entering into it. He showed this very necessity of all, and the Spirit in the Lord's remnant express just their sense of this; and He, bearing it as their representative, was heard in that He feared. Still it drew His Spirit for Israel (for Israel here it is that is in question, and that in the truth of their latter day position, oppressed and having enemies, ver. 5) to the Lord as His resource, for the communion with Him was uninterrupted and unbroken. On the cross vicariously the Lord did enter into judgment, but that is just what makes all the rest true for Israel, and this only as purging. Thence direction is sought—teaching, deliverance, guidance, and the cutting off of enemies, for He was Jehovah's servant. This, then, is the psalm of judgment, and Messiah's and the people's part in it is very plain, and how He could plead this for them, and they by His Spirit in them. The cry is founded on God's faithfulness and righteousness—not on theirs as regards the servant's condition. There was no entering into condition, This, I repeat, was just what Christ proved in the atonement. Righteousness is pleaded in all His relationship with the Lord; and then cutting off His enemies is mercy, and only mentioned as to this which puts mercy clearly in a new place—riddance of the earth, that there may be a land of uprightness and an earth of peace, through the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and they that troubled gone in mercy.

Psa. 140 then enters into the position of the righteous generally in the latter day, in presence of the enemy of the Spirit of Christ. Psa. 141. His thoughts before the Lord in the midst of the people in

that case. Psa. 142 He finds there are none—He is left alone. Psa. 143 The question of Lord as His servant through the available intercession of Christ—the presence of the Spirit of Christ in the remnant thus brought before the Lord alone, with the consequent direct supplication from verse 7 to end.

Psa. 144 Jehovah is celebrated by Messiah as in the war and conflict for the people. First (ver. 2), what He is to Him; then subduing His people under Him. Then comes the righteous inquiry for judgment: what is man? that the Lord so long lingers and pauses before He gets rid of the wicked and the evil. (Comp. Psa. 8) For here man is seen the proud adversary on earth of the man of God's right hand, after lengthened and infinite mercy bounded first by this state of adversary, which was patience, not with abstractedly possible return, but manifested opposition to good, and therefore would be feeble acquiescence in evil, now God's patience had been the patience of perfect power not of feebleness with evil. Man's worthlessness is here thus presented to Him. It was now the hand of strange children, and Messiah (pleading withal for those put for, and then with, whom He was afflicted) must be delivered. Man is like to vanity. “Bow thy heavens, O Jehovah;” and the righteous Messiah claims the intervention of power, and this brings judgment and new songs—judgment in order that righteousness may bear its unhindered and natural fruits of blessing. It is here with intercession for judgment, because of the position of things. Happy the people in this case of blessing of righteousness—Messiah's blessing; yea, the people that have Jehovah for their God. Thus the vanity of man, the judgment and blessing of righteousness, are all identified through Messiah with His people, even the remnant of Israel.

Psa. 145 Messiah extols Jehovah in the millennial blessings of peace (ver. 18, 19, 20) sheaving its introduction by the hearing of the cry of the sorrowful, oppressed, then yechidim-mercy and judgment. But that first statement gives the force of the psalm, and it is most lovely in unfolding His intercourse: the anthem between Him and His saints and all creation, His works and all flesh—the chorus extolling Jehovah, the blessed in that day. It is a most beautiful psalm in this respect, and carries us far into blessing: and it shall be centraneous. We however, in our own abiding—in sphere, eternal blessing; this with Messiah below.

Psa. 146 to the end is the great chorus of praise to Jah the Lord, the Jehovah, or Eternal One of creation, and of Israel, of which Israel was made dispensatorily the tried and blessed bead; Messiah as of the earth and of the flesh coming of them and coming to them, and withal the Lord's earthly sanctuary being in the midst of them, the center of the blessing and the peculiar place of nearness.

Psa. 147 The deliverer and executor of judgment, Zion's God the Lord. Messiah announces Him thus—He only could. They were the objects of it. Then He is to Israel the remnant, our God; and praise (and they at peace) is pleasant and comely. How lovely is this peace, and the Lord's prosperity in them! Yea, He takes pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy—not their own righteousness. Also they have His word, the oracles of God. He had not dealt so with any nation (the Church is high up above in these blessings). There are two points then: His mercy to Jerusalem, building it up and gathering the outcasts of Israel; and His power in creation (His own strength being the thing displayed and delighting in none else). The connection of Israel with creation blessing is very strong, and a very cardinal point in the order of God's economies. Christ as originally coming would have been (had men not been all sinful) the head

over them in this blessing. He shall be but taking in the heavens on a larger scale, and elevated on a higher principle of grace, and that in purification and redemption, risen as He shall be (as in Hos. 2:21, 23). Creation shall be restored in their restoration; but these higher things are brought in, and a more glorious source of it; but all linked together by the exaltation of the rejected but returned Man. The Second Adam is the Lord from heaven; but it is grace and government at this time, and not simple order of beauty with God all in all.

He sends His word into the world, and shows it to Jacob. His power in this nearness to Israel brought low is the great theme, however, of this psalm. His power—Jehovah is the theme however, not the Father, as in that character; and the heavens shall praise Him; though we in our own special church position rejoice there in the Father—our Father" the kingdom," it is written, "of their Father."

Psa. 148 Israel's relation with this general or universal praise is then taken up. This is the great earthly millennial result, but connected, as we have seen, with a sphere beyond it—all creation. Praise Jah is still the key-note. First, Praise Jehovah from the heavens; verse 7, praise from the earth. In the heavens are we; but this is not the subject of the Old Testament word. This mystery is hidden from ages and generations; but we know our place in it; but all the creatures in it are to praise Jehovah, for He created them. Then from the earth; and here the kings of the earth come in, and all people, princes, and judges of the earth. They are to praise the name of Jehovah; for His name alone is exalted—His glory above earth and heaven; but He had elevated the horn of His people. He is the praise of all His chasidim, even of the children of Israel—a people near unto Him. As power was shown in the former psalm in act, so the place of praise; Israel and creation are shown here, as alluded to at the close of it in the millennial hallelujah.

Psa. 149 rises up to the proper praise of Israel for themselves, as between themselves and God in this nearness. The saints here are always chasidim, i.e., Israel so accepted and beloved in mercy—the meek and God-honoring ones—the remnant.

Psa. 150 is the great and comprehensive chorus: God—El—the mighty and strong, and only One, who judges and swears in Himself alone, is celebrated—not Jehovah. It looks in the sanctuary, now indeed specially the heavenly Jerusalem is this in the day of glory for the Lamb, but intrinsically in the light which no man can approach unto. His own secret place of holiness and separatedness from all, He is praised in their thought—spiritual thought by the Holy Ghost—on earth at least alone reaches Him; then not only in His separation above all, but in the firmament of His power, the strength and stability of this place of steadfast testimony of immovable greatness and power. Then His acts and greatness; then with man's (still on earth) best praise; and then everything that hath breath is to celebrate Jab, the existing One—Him indeed in whom they live and move and have their being and breath to praise. It is our privilege now, but it is anticipative of the time when we shall actually be called on to do so. This shall be the full tide of unhindered praise to God Himself where He is for what He has done, goes with all given energies, and by all that hath breath in formal character. It is indeed Jewish and earthly; but as before it reached to the heavens—the created heavens—where we may be, here to the sanctuary of El where He is in His own glory. And this must close, as indeed it is the source of praise. For the soul rises up from Ashr■y-Ha-Ish to Hallelujah (Halleloo eth Jehovah), Halleloo ■l Bekodsho. Then the soul necessarily stops—at least, finds itself at the infinite close of all. Before it is known only by the

Holy Ghost.

Heave and Wave Offerings

The heave-offering ■■■■■■■■ (t'rumah) and wave-offering ■■■■■■■■ (t'nuphah) formed part of the provision made by the Lord for the priests and their families. By a grant, everlasting in its duration, God thus endowed the house of Aaron: "And this is thine, the heave-offering of their gifts, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel. I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute forever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it." (Num. 18:11.) To this law there was annexed one exception: "if the priest's daughter be married to a stranger, she may not eat of an offering (t'rumah) of the holy things. But if the priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat: but there shall no stranger eat thereof." (Lev. 22:12, 13.) Whilst the people were in their land, before the captivity as well as after it, the priests received these offerings (Neh. 10:37-39; 12:44; 13:5); and when faithfully surrendered by the people, they were found to be a plentiful provision. (2 Chron. 31:10.) When the nation shall be restored, never more to be exiled from the land of their fathers, this grant made in the wilderness shall be again acknowledged; and in God's holy mountain, the mountain of the height of Israel, there will He require their offerings (t'rumah), and the people shall bring them, "that the priest may cause the blessing to rest in their house." (Ezek. 20:40; 44:30.) The need of bringing the offerings Mal. 3:8 makes plain. The returned remnant had robbed God of tithes and offerings: so the announcement of the prophet follows, "ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." the tithes and offerings were God's; though the portion of the priests. Defrauding the priests of their just due, they robbed God and lost the blessing. When finally restored to their country, the law being written on their hearts, they will bring all the appointed offerings, and the priests provided for will cause the blessing to rest in their house

The terms in which this grant was made distinguish between the heave-offering and the wave-offering. The heave-offering was a portion of their gifts" heave-offering of all their gifts;" the wave-offering might be the whole of the thing offered. The idea conveyed by a heave-offering was the taking up a part to offer it to God; whereas the idea of the wave-offering is more general, implying consecration to God, for it was waved before the Lord. A gift might therefore be termed both a heave-offering and a wave offering; but every wave-offering could not be also called a heave-offering. To heave, required a residue from which it was lifted up; to wave, the gift itself only was requisite.

When the people were permitted to contribute of their substance for the tabernacle, their gifts were called heave-offerings (Ex. 25:2, 3; 35:5, 21-24; 36:3-6), for they offered of their possessions; but, in Ex. 35:22; 38:24-29, the gold and the brass which they brought were called wave-offerings, because consecrated to the service of God. Again, in Lev. 9:21, we read of the breasts and right shoulders of the peace-offerings of the congregation, at the consecration of Aaron and his sons,

being waved before the Lord. But in Ex. 29:28 the breast and right shoulder are termed a “heave-offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace-offering, even their heave-offering unto the Lord;” for looked at as a part of the sacrifice of their peace-offering they could together be called a heave-offering. The distinction between these terms is clear, and always kept up; for whilst, as above, the breast and the right shoulder could together be called a heave-offering, Scripture, when describing them as separate portions, with one exception noticed lower down (Num. 6:19), speaks of the wave-breast and the heave-shoulder; for the whole breast was waved, but only one shoulder was heaved. A portion of that which the shoulders symbolize was thus claimed by God, whilst all that the breast shadowed forth was declared to belong to Him. By the shoulder, capability for service seems to be symbolized; and by the right shoulder, that that which was best able to bear the burden should be yielded up to Him. See Gen. 49:15; Josh. 4:5; Psa. 81:6; Isa. 9:4, 6; 10:27; 22:22. Compare also Neh. 9:29; Zech. 11, where disobedience is described as “withdrawing the shoulder.” By the breast, affections would appear to be symbolized.

The heave-offering included the right shoulder of the peace-offering (excepting in the case of the Nazarite referred to below), and one cake out of the whole, but which accompanied the animal offered up as a peace-offering; the first of the dough (Num. 15:20), and all the tithes (Num. 18:24) including the corn, wine, and oil for the priests' use. (Neh. 10:39.) Besides these regular heave-offerings, the atonement money when the congregation were numbered (Ex. 30:13-15), the Lord's portion of the spoil of Midian (Num. 31:21), and the king's present, and that of his counselors, with the offering of the children of Israel for the second temple (Ezra 8:25), are called heave-offerings. And when the land shall be divided among the tribes afresh, the portion to be set apart for the Levites and the sanctuary will be regarded as a heave-offering. (Ezek. 45:6, 7; 48) Differing as these offerings do, the one from the other, they have one feature in common, viz., that they are all portions taken out of a residue, whether of fruits, of animals, of money, or of land, and as such are called heave-offerings.

Turning to the wave-offerings, beside the breast of the peace-offering, and the rites at the consecration of Aaron and his sons already referred to, there was the sheaf waved before the Lord, the firstfruits of the harvest, on the morrow after the sabbath in the passover week; and the two wave-loaves with their accompanying sacrifice offered in the feast of weeks. (Lev. 23:10, 17-20.) In addition to these were the offerings of the leper on the eighth day of his cleansing (Lev. 14); the jealousy-offering (Num. 5); that of the Nazarite at the completion of his vow (Num. 6); and the taking of the tribe of Levi for the service of the priests in lieu of all the firstborn of Israel. (Num. 8)

Understanding by the act of waving before the Lord consecration to Him, the breast of the peace offering was waved in token that the affections should be in Him whom the sacrifice prefigured—would be consecrated to God. So also the waving of the sheaf on the morrow after the Passover sabbath, typified the sanctification, or consecration, as risen from the dead, of Him who is the firstfruits (1 Cor. 15:23), and who rose on that day. At the expiration of the seven weeks, the two loaves baked with leaven were brought out of their habitation, and were waved before the Lord with the prescribed offerings. But here we meet with a most significant injunction. They were waved with the sacrifices still entire, though killed. Death had taken place, but not dismemberment. The whole animals were waved with the two loaves. (Lev. 23:19, 20.) Remembering what these two loaves typified—the Jew and Gentile together offered to God as the

firstfruits of the harvest (James 1:18), we can see the reason of this peculiar feature in that day's ritual, the whole animals waved, but waved after death. It is the Church publicly, as it were, consecrated to God as a whole. But since the Church was only formed after the resurrection of the Lord, and has its standing in resurrection, the animals were first killed and then waved. Death took place before the significant act of consecration was performed. Then death having taken place, the animals were waved whole before the Lord by the priest, presenting thus in type the Church as a whole consecrated to God, belonging for evermore to Him.

The sacrifices of the leper on the eighth day of his cleansing bring before us another thought, beautiful surely because true, and clearly shadowed forth in the act of the priest. In the leper cleansed we have an individual formerly redeemed, now restored to communion with God's people. The disease which had its seat in his flesh having broken out, he had been put outside the camp—was healed, the priest had looked on him and pronounced him clean, and his offerings had to be completed on the eighth day of his cleansing. “And he shall take two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe-lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering mingled with oil, and one log of oil and the priest shall take one he lamb, and offer him for a trespass-offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave-offering before the Lord: and he shall slay the lamb in the place where he shall kill the sin-offering and the burnt-offering, in the holy place; for as the sin-offering is the priest's, so is the trespass-offering: it is most holy.” (Lev. 14:10, 12, 13.) On the day of Pentecost they waved the sacrifices after they had been killed, here the trespass offering was waved with the log of oil before death. Why this marked difference? In both cases the whole animal was waved, to show that all connected with or typified by the sacrifice should be held as consecrated to God. In the case of the leper, however, the living animal was waved, to show that man as alive on earth should be really given up to God. Redeemed by blood, a member of the assembly which had God dwelling in their midst, all his life ought to be consecrated to God. In this he had failed, so the offering waved was a trespass-offering, not a peace-offering. The peace-offering spoke of communion enjoyed, the trespass-offering, of communion interrupted by sin on the part of the offerer. With the trespass-offering there was waved a log of oil, with which the quondam leper was to be anointed on the tip of his right ear, his right thumb, and the great toe of his right foot, and the rest of the oil in the priest's hand was poured over him, in token that now his ear must hear, and his hand act, and his feet walk as directed by the word of God, and the rest poured over him to show that whilst he had failed before, he was to remember he had been consecrated to God, because redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

The jealousy-offering, too, was waved. The charge against the woman was one of unfaithfulness to her husband, so the offering (a tenth part of an ephah of barley meal) was waved before the Lord. Consecration to her husband as his wife should. characterize her: this the offering spoke of, and this her husband had charged her with violating. So the priest was to take the jealousy-offering from her hand; and wave it before the Lord. (Num. 5:25.)

In the Nazarite we have special consecration, separation unto the Lord. When that time of special dedication was ended, the Nazarite presented himself at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and brought his sin-offering, his burnt-offering, and his peace-offering with the accompanying meat and drink offerings. The sin and burnt-offerings having been properly offered up, he presented his peace-offering, a ram, with the basket of unleavened bread. The ram was

brought because it was a question of special dedication to God, just as in the consecration of the priests the ram of consecration was enjoined to be offered up. When the ram had been killed and dismembered, the right shoulder sodden, with one unleavened cake and one unleavened wafer, was placed in the Nazarite's hand by the priest, and then waved by him (i.e., the priest) for a wave-offering before the Lord. (Num. 6:19, 20.) In the ordinary peace offerings the shoulder was heaved with the cakes, here it was waved; for this offering did not spring from a thankful heart rejoicing in its blessings, and desiring to present something of its substance to the Lord in recognition of His goodness: but it was the public declaration that the time of special separation to God had ended, so the right shoulder with the cakes was waved before the Lord. The man had been wholly separated by his vow to God; now be was to pass out of that state which he had voluntarily entered. Hence all was waved not heaved, and the shoulder symbolizing service was the portion commanded thus to be offered.

One more wave-offering has to be noticed—that of the Levites, taken for the Lord's service, instead of the firstborn in Israel. When that was done in the wilderness, the Levites did not bring a burnt-offering and sin-offering, but were waved by Aaron as an offering themselves. “And Aaron shall wave the Levites before the Lord for a wave-offering of the children of Israel that they may execute the service of the Lord.” (Num. 8:11, 13, 15-21. See marginal reading.) On that day all the Levites were publicly consecrated to God's service—all the firstborn in Israel belonged to him (Ex. 13:2), but He accepted the Levites in their stead as far as they would go man for man. A heave-offering here as in the other cases would have been out of place. It was not some of the firstborn whom God claimed, nor some of the Levites that He accepted. He claimed all the firstborn, but took all the Levites as far as they would go in their stead, a wave-offering of the children of Israel.

Comparing the different passages then in which the heave-offerings and wave-offerings are mentioned, the distinction between them comes out, and the teaching regarding more especially the latter is made plain. We see that the language of scripture is indeed accurate, and may note, in this, as in other things, that the substitution of one term for another (often found in the writings of men) would introduce confusion in the things of God, and mar the beauty of the lessons intended to be conveyed by the divine author of the book. C. E. S.

Chapter 97

How to Study the New Testament

Such is the title of Dean Alford's small book before me. The first volume is devoted to the gospels and the acts of the apostles. Experience shows how few can form a just estimate of what is written with a knowledge beyond that of most and in a style attractive to the multitude. I propose therefore to notice the work briefly, so as to convey a correct notion of its character and plan, and thus to check undue confidence on the one hand and unjust depreciation on the other. Active-minded the author always is; and this is shown in suggesting questions rather than in settling them.

The first chapter is introductory, which opens with the parable of a varied landscape presenting wholly different objects to those who really observe it, not to speak of such as pass on as heedlessly as the cattle on the hill-side. It appears to me, however, that if the Dean still adhere to his denial of a distinct divine design in each of the Gospels, he himself destroys the main key to an intelligent enjoyment and application of their stores, as well as the true solution of their apparent discrepancies.

We are told indeed of God's beneficent purpose in giving us not one indubitable, plain, historic Gospel, but four, differing as originally written, and yet more through thousands of various readings, and again through translation from the tongue of inspiration into the many languages of the earth (p. 9). But this is both superficial and confused: superficial, because if there be a difference of divine design in each of the Gospels, they must necessarily wear a diverse form flowing from the special object of the Spirit; confused, because variety of reading and version is only a question of man's infirmity, not of God's design. Things differing so widely and essentially ought not to be classed together.

So in page 10 the ignorance of the clergy and laity is not without reason rebuked. “The utmost that seems expected even from the clergy themselves is to be able to affirm that the scripture says so and so. But what scripture says it—with what intent—how far, in the words quoted, the context is duly had in regard—whether they do or do not rightly represent the sense of the original; these things not one clergyman in ten seems to take into account; still less those laymen who would be ashamed to quote in the same slovenly manner any of the well-known classical authors.” But it is evident that when the various readings and the true rendering are ever so settled, to overlook the design of the Spirit is fatal to anything like a full understanding of the Gospels, which like the rest of scripture differs in this respect from all the books of men. God never writes save with a worthy moral purpose: still less is it conceivable when He is unfolding to us the glorious person of the Word made flesh and dwelling among us. The accuracy of a critic carries him not beyond the letter: the denial of design is more fatal than all the faults of a sloven, bad as these are.

“If we could know exactly how any given event related in the Gospels happened” (p. 11), it were but a small part of the matter; nor is it true that with this “we should at once be able to account for the variations in the narratives and the separate truth of each would be shown.” It is a deeper question than one of “the exact details of any event thus narrated” or “of the position of the narrator with respect to it.” The Dean only skims over the surface. No such acquaintance with facts

suffices to meet the case; for scripture is not a mere human book. The solution is far more profound; yet is it nigh at hand, in our mouth and in our heart, if we confess a divine author and believe in a purpose in each according to God. “Our plain duty in making a right use of the Gospels is, firmly and fearlessly to recognize these (i.e., the apparent discrepancies), and to leave them as fearlessly unsolved, if no honest solution can be found. A way may be opened by and by, in the process of human discovery and the toil of human thought; or the time for a solution may not come till the day when all things shall be known.” Our readers will see how all sinks to the level of man in the Dean's language; and consequently he rises no higher than the wit or labor of man. Is God duly in his thoughts? Can one write thus who believes in the presence, operation, and teaching of the Holy Spirit? He throws away the key, and then talks, with more or less despair, of the difficulty of opening the door. This is not the wisdom that descends from above, nor the faith that expects from the most bountiful Giver. It is honesty no doubt to confess our ignorance; but is there not One sent down to guide into all the truth? Distrust of Him is not good. It is to fail in faith, the first of requisites for the right use of the gospels, or of scripture in general, on the writer's own spewing.

I cannot admire the comparison of spots in the sun apparent to the telescope (p. 13). We must not confound original perfectness as given of God through inspired men; and providential preservation in man's hands, spite of his feebleness and unfaithfulness in detail. Nor do I like the suggestion that one only supreme record, instead of four inspired records, “might have been perilous for a dispensation and a Church which was to regard not the letter but the spirit, and to walk not by sight but by faith” (p. 17). How evident the ruinous results of overlooking specialty of design. Admit this, and the true answer is plain: the fullness of Christ could not be adequately shown out but by the four Gospels.

As little does the aim of pp. 18-20 commend itself to my mind. Granted the variety of readings in the five hundred and more manuscripts of the Gospels; granted also that the most ancient MSS. least sanction the tendency to that assimilation of the Gospels which is found in the more modern copies. The distinct forms are of the greatest moment as the expression of distinct purpose, while every gospel is of course thoroughly true. In short, it is not the poor thought of merely trusting the Gospels, but of appreciating the higher truth of their various presentations of Christ.

The Dean proceeds next to compare the original with our Authorized English Version, which he says “abounds with errors and inadequate renderings.” (p. 22.) This is true; yet I question whether any critical text yet offered would not lead to errors quite as great, and whether his own translation does not abound in renderings quite as inadequate. No doubt many mistakes in the Received Text are corrected by the results of critical labor; but who does not know the too many errors adopted so strangely by Griesbach, Scholz, Lachmann, Tischendorf, &c., by one or more, from which the faulty common text is free ? Nor has Dean Alford himself kept clear of this perverse taste.

The chapter closes with the setting forth of two qualities indispensable for this holy study—honesty and charity. Are they really understood?

Is it real honesty to be ever exaggerating the apparent discrepancies of the gospels Is it honesty at all to yield this point or that to the free handling of adversaries, when a spirit of unbelief has deprived one of the true God-given means of vindicating His word? Certainly there is no reason to be afraid of any truth; but why fear the lies or sneers of the enemy? Compromise of the truth will not conciliate cavilers; and we are bound to resist such as firmly as we would disclaim all

compromise with falsehood. I have proved that many alleged facts among the critics are no facts at all; and there are many more which are in no way the fruit of God's will, but of man's weakness or worse, who has failed in respect of transmitting His word as decidedly as in every other sphere and function.

It it real charity to write softly of those who corrupt or undermine the scripture? Human amiability is not divine love which abhors evil as decidedly and uncompromisingly as it cleaves to what is good.

“For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments.” Forbearance is all well in matters of conscience: of grace in enduring personal slights or wrongs there cannot be too much; but there is nothing like true love for resenting a dishonor done to Christ or to God's word. It is sheer weakness, if not an utterly faithless heart, which bears patiently infidel inroads on scripture, and which claims credit for honesty when, half-rash, half-timorous, it surrenders fragments of divinely-inspired truth to the pertinacious efforts of the unbeliever.

MARK

is the subject of the second chapter. Here the same painful humanitarian spirit prevails. The Dean dwells much on the eye-witnesses. “Their oral narratives had been for the most part nearly in the same strain, especially as regarded those sacred words of the Lord. But in different parts of the Christian world, according as the living voice of this or that apostle was present, the great narrative took different shapes and arrangements. Truth they all told—truth of a more precise and higher order than narratives founded on human accuracy can usually (!) attain; but each, from the very circumstance of his having been himself present at the occurrence of the facts, gave them as they impressed his own character and were reproduced by his own feelings. One loved to describe to his hearers the very look and gesture of the Lord as He spoke comfort or warning; another seems ever given to contemplate Him as the King and Lord of Israel announced in Old Testament prophecy, to retain in faithful memory the long connection of His wonderful discourses, and to enounce with reverent recollection their stately periods; while another, or more than one, in different fields of Gentile labor might love to dwell on those of His sayings and acted parables which had world-wide reference—might love to look on Him as the light of the Gentiles as well as the glory of His people Israel. And so various narratives grew up here and there, all showing in the main form the common testimony which all the apostles bore before they parted from Jerusalem, but differently deflected from that common narrative in things indifferent.”

This long extract (pp. 29, 30) will suffice to show the possession which this very low theory has got of the author's mind mainly flowing from the error already noticed; as if the differences were accidental infirmities, instead of being designed of God as a part of His wonderful method for giving us the truth fully and perfectly.

Again, it is another error, common alike to the traditional and to the rationalist parties, that Mark was Peter's interpreter and took to writing down the good tidings as usually delivered by that apostle. There is hardly more solidity in another tradition, that while Peter and Paul were founding the church at Rome (!), Matthew wrote his gospel. Of course, tradition makes Luke stand similarly related to Paul as Mark to Peter. Dean Alford rightly rejects the idea of each evangelist supplementing the account of his predecessor, but be makes them “three forms of the oral apostolic testimony, committed to writing, under the direction and inspiration of God's Holy Spirit,

independently of one another.” Yet inspiration, according to him, does not preclude mistake. He carries his Arminianism even into his notion of the inspired word. He then gives a sample of Mark's minute touches, as well as additional details not given elsewhere, which refute the otherwise unworthy notion that his gospel is an abridgment of Matthew's or Luke's. The chapter is closed with two useful lists—one of the more remarkable differences from the received text, the other of the chief differences from the Authorized Version in matters of translation.

His first list consists of course chiefly of corrections in the text common to the best editors, such as chapter 1:2 (“Esaias the prophet” for “the prophets” which is an evident accommodation to the circumstances, and “before thee” omitted at the end); chapter 2:17, “to repentance” (brought in from Luke) omitted; so also chapter 3:5, “whole as the other” (from Matthew); verse 29, “sin” for “damnation” or judgment. I have passed over his second instance, which seems to me altogether precarious. Chapter 1:4, “John the Baptist was in the wilderness preaching.” That is, he inserts the article and omits the conjunction, contrary to the judgment of Griesbach, Scholz, and even Lachmann. Bengel does not even notice the various readings. Tischendorf in his second and third editions of Leipsic (1849) reads as Alford now does; but in his seventh he went back to his first impressions, though now in his eighth edition, which is excessively modified by the Sinai MS., he adopts the article, but retains Kai which is wanting only in the Vatican and three cursives. It seems rash indeed to present this at least doubtful question as one of the more remarkable places where our present text in this gospel is not that of the more eminent authorities. He omits “that hear” in chapter iv. 24, and from “verily” to the end of chapter 6:14 (“most probably"), as also “about” in verse 44. In chapters 9:31, 10:34 he reads “after three days;” in chapter 11:8 not “off the trees” but “out of the fields;” in chapter 12:32, “thou hast truly said that he is one;” in chapter 13:4 “when these things are about to be all fulfilled” (omitting “spoken of by Daniel the prophet”); in chapter 14:22, he omits “eat” rightly; verse 24, with Tischendorf and Tregelles “new,” also “because of me this night;” and verses 27 and 70, “and thy speech agreeth thereto.” In chapter 15 verse 28 is omitted by recent critics save Lachmann.

I utterly reject the criticism which makes the gospel of Mark end with verse 8, because the Vatican and Sinai MSS. agree with some other slight confirmation, more particularly as there appears to be a space left at the end of the Vatican MS. The motive of the scribes for stopping there may be a question; but there is no sufficient reason to conclude that the gospel really terminated so abruptly. Nor does the difference of style, or rather the employment here of words and expressions not used elsewhere in the gospel, justify the inference that it was not written by Mark. Possibly it may have been added later by the same hand; for certainly the last verse indicates a date considerably later than that which is usually assigned to the publication of this gospel. Language can be easily imitated in so short a fragment; whereas writers would freely describe new facts with new expressions, while underneath the surface lie, in my opinion, the most indelible traces of connection with the character and aim stamped on this evangelist by the Holy Spirit. Would this organic link have been kept up, had apostolic men, during apostolic times, added the general compendium of the events of the resurrection with which the present gospel concludes?

The correction of renderings is generally right. Thus chapter 1:10, “cleft asunder” and verse 14 “delivered up;” in chapter 2:18 “were fasting,” and verse 27, “on account of,” twice; in chapter 3:14, “appointed” (not “ordained") (chapter 4:11, the omission of “to know” ought to be in the former list); in chapter 4:22, for “abroad,” “to light;” in verse 2:37, for “full,” “filling;” in verse 38, the pillow (or

boat-cushion), and in verse 41, “who then is this?” In chapter 5:30 for “virtue,” “power;” in verse 36, “overheard,” instead of “heard.” In chapter 6:20, “kept him safe,” for “observed him;” in verse 21, “chief men;” in verse 49, an apparition;” and in verse 56, “market-place.” In chapter 7, he puts Corban in the regular place of a predicate; in verse 28, “for even” (instead of “yet"); in verse 31,” borders” (as also in chap. 10:1). In chapter 8:36, 37, he would say “life,” instead of “soul,” as in verse 35—a very questionable change, if it be not worse. In chapter 9:12, he would make the latter part a question. In chapter 10:52, “saved.” In chapter 11:17, “for all the nations.” In chapter 12:26, “in the history concerning the bush, how;” and in 39, “chief places.” In chapter 13:12, “shall put them to death.” (Is not this a change for the worse?) In verse 28, “now learn the parable from the fig tree: when now her branch becometh tender;” in verse 32, “none,” and “not even.” In chapter 14:2, “during the feast;” in verse 18, “even he that eateth;” verse 31, “must die;” verse 38, “willing” verse 68, “I neither knew him, nor;” and in verse 69, “the maid,". omitting “again.” In chapter 15:5, “made him no further answer.” In verses 31, 32, there must be an error. It ought not to stand, “himself he cannot save, the Christ, the King of Israel. Let him descend now.” In verses 37, 39, “breathed his last.” In chapter 16:2, when the sun was risen;” in verse 8, “for trembling and amazement had possession of them;” in verse 12, “was manifested;” verse 14, “the eleven themselves;” in verse 15, “the whole creation;” and in verse 20, “the signs that followed.”

Most of these are known. But some are doubtful, others I believe wrong. Space forbids discussion, even if other reasons did not weigh.

Chapter 98

How to Study the New Testament: Matthew

IT is pleasant to observe an improvement in tone as to the writer of this Gospel, and that the Dean no longer labors under the indecision of the earliest issue of his larger work, as if there could be any doubt that Matthew and Levi are but two names of the same person. He who had been a publican till called to follow Jesus, was just the man, if the Spirit inspired him, to write the account of the Messiah rejected of the Jew, and then God's salvation to the ends of the earth. Here of course the failure to seize the design enfeebles the view of this Gospel. Nevertheless, it was impossible to overlook the fact that THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN—a phrase found here only—is a characteristic theme of this Evangelist; as also his presentation of the longer discourses of the Lord in His general ministry, as well as his fuller parabolic and prophetic teaching.

The Messianic character of the Gospel is, spite of theory, briefly described in the pages that follow. But is it correct to say that by the “Forerunner, the Elias of the new dispensation, it is necessary that the Messiah be anointed” (pp. 57, 58), seeing that the manifest fact is that to anoint others with the Spirit was the peculiar distinctive privilege of the Lord, in express contrast with John the Baptist (John 1, Acts 1), and that God, not man, anointed Jesus Himself as man? Nor is there the least warrant for treating His victory in the temptation or His ministry with its miraculous seals as the king going forth “to his work of saving his people from their sins.” This may be poetic, but is certainly vague and loose.

He says rightly, however, that in several of his groupings Matthew does not regard historic sequence; and this is as true of some discourses as of facts brought together for a special end. But it is untrue that this is a question of laxity; or that one who thus arranges for a dispensational object like Matthew or for a moral design like Luke departs from the strictest truth any more than Mark, who adheres to the mere succession of time. Both plans are excellent and both are given of God, which is the best of all, though obviously the style of “chronological annals” is the more elementary, and that of groupings the profounder of the two. In neither case is a Christian to be “a slave of letter” (p. 60); in every case both the words and the spirit are of God and addressed to the faith of man.

There is nothing in the sketch of Matthew which follows that calls particularly for praise or blame, save to notice that the closing scene of the prophecy on Mount Olivet (chap. 25.) is quite misunderstood. The gathering of the nations before the Son of man is not “the great final judgment!” It is the judgment of the quick, not of the dead—of a part of mankind, namely all the Gentiles, but not the Jews, and on a single issue suited to a single generation, not an appraisal of works in general. The question was, Did they (the Gentiles) honor the King in the person of His messengers who bore witness of His coming kingdom (the “gospel of the kingdom” —chap. 24:14)? Hence “THE KING” is as suitable here as it would be out of place in the great white throne judgment of the dead (Rev. 20:11-15), where none but wicked appear, whether Jews or Gentiles, and are all alike judged according of their works, and all alike consigned to the lake of fire, for no blessed are there spoken of but only the lost.

The following is his list of correct readings in this Gospel, though I am far from accepting them all—

In chapter 1:25, “a son” instead of “her firstborn son.” In chapter 5:22 “without cause” probably to be omitted; verse 27, omit “by them of old time;” in verse 44 omit “bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,” and the words, “despitefully use you and” to be omitted; and in verse 47 for “publicans so” read “Gentiles the same.” In chapter 6:1 “alms” should be “righteousness;” in verse 12 “we have forgiven;” in verse 13 the prayer should end with “evil;” in verse 18 omit “openly.” In chapter 8. 15 it should be “unto him;” in verse 28 most probably “Gadarenes.” In chapter 9:13 omit “to repentance;” in verse 36 for “fainted” read “were harassed.” In chapter 10:4 for “Canaanite” read “Cananean,” i.e., a zealot. In chapter xi. 2 for “two” read “by means of.” In chapter 12:6 for “one greater” read “that which is greater.” In chapter 13:55 for “Joses,” read “Joseph” (some read “John"). In chapter 17:4 read “I will make.” In chapter 19:17 read “Why askest thou me concerning good? There is One good;” in verse 20 “from my youth up” should in all probability be left out. In chapter 20:7 omit “and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive,” as also “and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with” (inserted from Mark). In chapter 21:13 read “are making.” In chapter 22:7 read, “but the king was wroth;” in verse 23 for “which say” read “saying.” Verse 14 of chapter 23. to be omitted (inserted from Mark and Luke). In chapter 24:7 omit “and pestilence;” in verse 42 for “hour” read “day.” In chapter 25:3 read “for the foolish, when they took their lamps, took” In chapter 26:3 omit “and the scribes;” in verse 42 read, “if this may not pass away except I drink it;” in verse 60, “but found none; even though many false witnesses came.” In chapter 27:64, “by night” should disappear. In chapter 28:9, “as they went to tell his disciples” should be probably omitted.

This is the list of wrong renderings corrected—

In chapter 2:16, “borders” for “coasts” (and so in chapters 15:21, 22; 19:1). In chapter 3:7 “generation” should be “offspring” (as in chapters 12:34; 23:33). In chapter 4:5, “the pinnacle;” in verse 12 “delivered up.” In chapter 5:9 and 45, “sons.” In chapter 6:23, “how dark is the darkness;” in verses 25, 27, 28, 31, 34 (and 10:19), “thought” should be “anxious thought.” In chapter 8:12 “sons” (and so chapter 9:15, 12:27, 13:38, and 23:15, 31); in verse 16 “a word;” and in verse 24 “was being covered.” In chapter 10:39 read “hath found,” and “hath lost.” In chapter 11:7 “see” should be “gaze upon” (not the same as “see” in verses 8 and 9); in verse 14, “shall come;” in verse 19 “was justified;” and in verse 27 “will (or ‘is minded to') reveal him.” In chapter 12:21, “hope;” verse 24, “this man” (so in chapters 26:67, 27:47); in verse 31, “of the Spirit;” in verse 41, 42, “more than,” twice. In chapter 13:19 “this is he which was sown by the wayside;” in verse 20, “be that was sown upon the stony places; in verse 22, 23, “was sown upon” or “among.” In chapter 14:26, “apparition.” In chapter 15:5, “that wherein thou mightest have been benefited by me is a gift [to God]; [he is free] and shall not honor his father or his mother;” in verse 27 “yet” should be “forever;” in verse 32, “will not,” “am not willing to.” In chapter 16:22, “God be gracious to thee;” in verse 26, “soul” twice is taken as “life.” In chapter 18:12, “Both he not leave the ninety and nine upon the mountain and goeth and seeketh.” In chapter 19:10, “expedient;” in verse 23, “with difficulty.” In chapter 20:14, “it is my will to give.” In chapter 21:33, “left his house,” (as in chap. 25:14 also). In chapter 23:6 “uppermost place;” in verse 10, “neither be ye called leaders; for one is your leader;” in verse 24, “straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel;” in verse 26, “the inside of.” In chapter 24:12, 13, “because iniquity hath abounded, the love of the many shall wax

cold. But he that endured," &c.; in verse 32, "Now learn the parable from the fig-tree; when now his branch becometh tender;" in verse 36, "none." In chapter 25:8, "going out;" in verse 46, both "everlasting." In chapter 26:5, "during the feast;" in verse 35, "though I must die;" in verse 64, "henceforth." In chapter 27:9, "set a price on;" in verse 10, "commanded me;" in verse 44, "cast the same in his teeth" has nothing corresponding in the original, but "reviled him;" in verse 45, "all the earth;" in verse 50, "yielded up his spirit;" in verse 56," the sons of Zebedee;" in verse 66, "sealing the stone, besides posting the guard." In 28:3, "appearance;" in verse 19, "make disciples of;" and in verse 20, "all the days."

Most of these are familiarly known and just. Some in both lists are questionable. It not my purpose to discuss minutiae now, but only to add that the Dean of Canterbury confounds, as do most, the relation of Christ to the Church with that in which He stands toward Israel. It is unscriptural to say, "the King and Head over all to His Church." (p. 77.) So to the soul individually, in the following page, "Seek ever this thy King and Savior." For never does God's word so speak. It is to Judaize unwittingly. He is my Savior and Lord; He is Head to the Church; but He is King of Israel. There is no error more widely and profoundly injurious to the Christian than this, trifling as the ignorant might account it.

How to Study the New Testament: Luke

The Dean appears to seize the bearing of this third gospel more distinctly than that of the first two. Pages 79-95 are a fair account of his leading characteristics in sketching the general course of the gospel. One of the few notices which must be excepted is the use made of the Pharisee and the publican, in chapter 18, where he still teaches, as in his larger work, that the latter “went down to his house justified.” “How sweet an echo there is here of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, for which Luke's great companion, himself in his own estimation ‘the chief of sinners,' argued and toiled.” (p. 83.) This, as an exact interpretation and not a mere accommodation for evangelical purposes, is quite unfounded. It ought to have been left to the late Mr. J. Walker, in whose “Remains” the idea is given. There are many reasons for rejecting the notion. One is the very point of the parable, that though so deeply overwhelmed by his sins, he went down to his house justified rather than (exceeding) the other; for such is the regular force of παρ■ with the accusative. Here it could be nothing else. But this excludes justification (in the doctrinal sense of the Apostle Paul), which does not admit of comparison or degree. “By him all who believe are justified.” Besides, if this were meant, the participle ought to be δικαιωθε■ς, and not δεδικυιωμ■νος. The perfect is only used by the apostle to express, not justification by faith, by which we have peace with God, but justification from sin—the state in which the believer is set as knowing himself dead to the old man, which has been crucified with Christ. This, clearly, is in no way intended in the parable, as it is unfolded in Rom. 6 and not chapter v. And this lands the Dean, in his earlier work, in the mischievous conclusion that “he who would seek justification before God must seek it by humility and not by self-righteousness.” It is very sure that every converted man is broken down; but is it sound doctrine that the soul must seek justification by humility? What confusion results from jumbling together the meanings of a word in God's book!

The Dean's first list suggests the omission (with and B.) in chapter 1:28, of “blessed art thou among women;” verse 29, of “when she saw him;” and verse 35, “of thee.” In chapter ii. 14, “Peace among men of good pleasure” (i. e., God's elect); verse 22, “their (for her) purification;” verse 35, “his father and mother;” and verse 40, omit “in spirit.” In chapter 4:4, omit “but by every word of God;” verse 5, read “And taking him up, he showed him;” verse 8, omit “get thee behind me, Satan; for;” and verse 18, “to heal the broken-hearted.” Omit “Christ” in verse 41; and for “Galilee,” in verse 44, read “Judaea.” In chapter 5:33, omit “why do;” verse 38, “and both are preserved;” 39, “straightway,” and for “better,” read “good.” I need not say that some of these changes seem precarious. But the omission of the “second-first” (or second after the first") in chapter 6:1, though not given by some of the most ancient copies, is due to the difficulty of the phrase. The Dean thinks it has never been satisfactorily explained. It really means the first sabbath after the first sheaf was waved before the Lord; not the first sabbath of the paschal week, which was a high day, and followed by the day of waving the first-fruits. The next sabbath was this “second-first,” the earliest sabbath when a pious Israelite would venture to eat from a cornfield. In verse 25, read “full now;” verse 36, omit “therefore;” and verse 48, “for it was founded upon a rock,” should be “because it was well-built.” In chapter 7:19, “the Lord,” for “Jesus;” and verse 31, omit “and the

Lord said." In chapter 8:3, "him" should be "them;" verse 37, "the country round about the Gadarenes;" verse 48, omit "be of good comfort;" and verse 54, "put them all out," &e. In chapter 9:1, "the twelve;" verse 7, omit "by him;" verse 10, "to a city called Bethsaida;" verse 35, "chosen" for "beloved;" verse 48, "is" for "shall be;" verse 54, omit "even as Elias did." He admits the omission of MSS. in verses 55, 56 (from "and said save them") is contrary to the evidence of the oldest versions and very ancient writers, and so the question is doubtful. In chapter 10:15, read "And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted to heaven? thou," &c.; verse 19, "have given;" verse 20, omit "rather;" verse 21, read "in the Holy Spirit;" and verse 39, "the Lord's feet." In chapter 11:2-4, "Father, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; give us day by day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation." In verse 44, omit "Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites;" and verse 48, "their sepulchers;" verse 53, read "when he was gone out;" and omit "seeking" with last clause in verse 54. In chapter 12:15, insert "all" before "covetousness;" and in verse 31, omit "all." In chapter 13:15, "ye hypocrites;" verse 24, "the narrow door;" verse 31, "in that hour;" and verse 35, omit "desolate" and "verily." In chapter 14:3, add "or not;" verse 5, should be "a son(!) or an ox;" verse 34, "salt therefore is good; but if even the salt," &c. In chapter 15:22, add "quickly." In chapter 16:9, "it fails;" verse 25, "he is comforted here, and," &c. In chapter 17:3, "if thy brother sin;" verse 9, omit "I trow not;" and verse 36 altogether. In chapter 19:45, omit "and them that bought." In chapter 20:30, omit "took her to wife, and died childless." In chapter 21:4, omit "of God;" and verse 8, "therefore;" verse 25, "distress of nations, in despair at the roaring of the sea and the waves;" and verse 36, "may be able." In chapter 22:64, omit "struck him on the face." In chapter 23:8, omit "many things;" (verse 17, doubtful;) verse 35, "the Christ of God, the chosen," or "the chosen Christ of God;" verse 39, "art thou not the Christ?" verse 42, "Jesus, remember me;" and verse 51, omit "also himself." In chapter 24:1, omit "and certain others with them;" and perhaps 42, "and of an honeycomb;" verse 46, read "Thus it is written that Christ should suffer and should rise," &c.; verse 49, omit "of Jerusalem."

As to the second list of better translations, there are given the following:-In chapter 1:1, "narrative concerning;" verse 3, "traced down accurately;" verse 4, "those sayings wherein thou wert instructed;" verse 48, "shall congratulate me," or "account me happy;" and verse 59, "were calling." In chapter 2:1, 2, 3, 5, "enrolled" and "enrollment;" verse 10, "all the people;" verse 12, "a babe;" verse 19, "kept all these words, pondering them;" verse 33, "concerning him;" verse 35, "that reasonings out of many hearts may be revealed;" verse 38, "she coming in at the same hour;" verse 40, "becoming filled;" verse 43, "boy" or "lad;" verse 49, "among my Father's matters." In chapter 3:7, "He said therefore" and "offspring;" verse 23, "was about thirty years of age when he began (his ministry)." In chapter 4:9, "the pinnacle." In chapter 5:6, "were bursting;" verse 22, "reasonings;" verse 34, "sons" (and in chapter 6:35; 16:8, twice). In chapter 6:11, "folly;" verse 15, "son" is not expressed (nor "brother," nor sister, nor mother chapter 24:10); verse 17, "upon a level place.... number of the people;" verse 19, "power" (also ver. 46); verse 20, for "be" read "are;" verse 48, "he is like a man building an house, who digged and went deep." In chapter 7:5, "and himself built us our synagogue;" verse 24, "multitudes," as in Matt. 11:7, and "gaze upon;" verse 30, "towards." In chapter viii. 4, "coming;" verse 19, "multitude;" verse 29, "was commanding," and "demon" (as 9:42); verse 33, "precipice;" verse 40, omit "gladly," and verse 44, "hem," as in Matt. 9:32. In chapter ix. 32, "but having kept awake;" verse 43, "majesty;" verse 45, "that they might not perceive it;" and verse 51, "And it came to pass, as the days of his receiving up were being

accomplished, he himself," &c. In chapter s. 22, "is pleased to reveal." In chapter 11:8, "shamelessness;" verse 12, "give;" verse 13, "the Father from heaven;" verses 31, 32, "more than," twice; verse 34, "candle," as in verse 33. In chapter xii. 15, "For not because a man hath abundance, doth his life consist in the things which he possesseth;" verses 18, 19, "good things;" verses 22, 25, 26, "anxious thoughts;" verse 37, "their lord;" and verse 49, "what will I? would that it were already kindled." Those from chapter 13 to the end are of no great moment. Nor do these given here call for particular remark.

Chapter 100

I Have Brought You Unto Myself

There are two subjects of special importance, between our souls and God: how God made us His—and the new associations into which He brings us, as suited to Himself.

Christ, in the efficacy of the work which He finished on the cross, is the answer to the first of these subjects: and a risen, ascended Lord, who lives in the presence of God for us, “crowned with glory and honor,” is the ground of the last.

Another point of great moment to us individually, is how we enter into these; for unless we know that all which separated us from God once, when we were “dead in trespasses and sins,” is put away forever; and that we are brought nigh by the blood, which, though shed on earth, is sprinkled where God is—there can be neither confidence nor boldness for worship “in the holiest.”

These two subjects may be further considered in the light of scripture: the book of Exodus, teaching how God makes a people His own; and the Chronicles, what are the associations which He forms for Himself and them.

A passing glance will show us the difference between a people coming out of the house of bondage, with their kneading-troughs and borrowed jewels of gold and silver, and the same people in the possession of all that Jehovah could bestow on Solomon and the nation, as the outward expression of God's delight in them. Another glance will tell us that the power of God in Egypt, when He was making this people His own, manifesting itself by plagues and judgments against Pharaoh, so that none escaped; whereas, in the brightest times of Solomon's reign, there was the unrestrained power of God in blessing, filling all hearts with rejoicing and praise.

Leaving these outward distinctions, let us bring into prominence the great fact, that deliverance from Egypt was by the overthrow of all enemies; and that relations with God are established in the peace, rest, and glory, which suit Himself, when there is no longer an enemy to overthrow! The triumphant song at the Red Sea was after Israel saw Pharaoh, his captains, chariots, and horses sink as lead into the depths.

It is thus God makes us His own. The power of the foe, from first to last, must be overthrown; so that we can look behind, and know there is nothing to pursue us; and we can look before, with the certainty that there is no power “to separate from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The redemption song of Ex. 15 takes in these two extreme points in its compass, commencing with “the Lord hath triumphed gloriously,” and concluding with “all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away, till thy people pass over, O Lord.” Our deliverance from every adverse power is not to be confounded with our peaceful associations with God Himself.

The Red Sea was but a preliminary step to this blessed consummation, as was also the subsequent crossing of Jordan. What a grand inauguration of a people, as we see them led out from cruel bondage into Canaan's rest; and what an expression to us of a yet greater calling, when

the heavens shall open to let in the new-born race, made one with Christ in life, righteousness, and glory God knows how, in faithful love, to record in His book the exodus of His Israel; and the night of their departure is to be as sacredly kept throughout their generations, as will be their entrance into the promised land under the Captain of the Lord's host in the time of Joshua. Who has not marveled at the records which the loving care of God has so minutely preserved—their departures, journeyings, encampments! The cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night; all tell of the faithful love that accompanied them every step of the way.

Still, this is the history of a migratory people in wilderness circumstances, as yet on their road to Canaan and the glory. The tabernacle, rich in its types and altars, with a mercy-seat surmounted by the cherubim which looked inward in rapt surprise, must yield to the temple, and to the Mount Zion, and the city of the great king, and the day when these same cherubim shall look outward with delight upon the grand result of accomplished redemption.

Moses and Joshua have served their day and generation, and are succeeded by Solomon, in whom will be displayed the associations which Jehovah had prepared for Himself and His people. Peace, prosperity, and blessing are to be the characteristics of these illustrious times. Foundations will now be laid; hewn stones and timber of Lebanon; castings from the plain of Jordan; Huram the king of Tire, and his cunning workmen; yea, all must become tributary to the erection of this magnificent temple of the Lord.

The dawn of that day is come, when the treasures entrusted to the Levites shall find their proper place of abode, according to these chronicles: “And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant into his place, to the oracle of the house into the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims, and they drew out the staves of the ark.” Another character is to prevail in these new relations with Jehovah; like our antitypical ark, the Lord Himself, no longer to be known after the flesh, a stranger upon the earth, in humiliation, or as completing a work given Him to do Long ago He has said, “It is finished,” and “they drew out the staves,” though these staves unseen from without, will always be the wonder of those who are in heaven, as they were once viewed “from the ark, before the oracle.”

That great mystery of “God manifest in the flesh,” has given birth to another, even to Him that “was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.” So again, if we recall Him as the sacrificial Priest, we are taught, “this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right-hand of God.” What in antitype are “the staves drawn out,” but a finished work below, and a Priest sat down in the heavens? This, as we have said, becomes the basis of our intercourse with God, founded on accomplished redemption, and a triumphant resurrection.

The first book of Chronicles opens to the reader its new genealogies, all tending to the subjects we are considering: how God makes a people His own, and how He brings them, finally, into association with what suits Himself. From the genealogies, we pass onward to chapter x., the setting aside of Saul the first king, the man who “was higher than any of the people, from his shoulders and upward,” in keeping with the original act of God. “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”

These Chronicles lead on to the anointing of David, the incoming one, “with his mighty men, who joined him with the bands of the children of Israel at Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him,

according to the word of the Lord.” Conflicts and victories mark their path, and clear the way of all obstructions; while the charge to Solomon, the numbering of the Levites, the courses of the priests and singers, the offerings for the temple, and David's prayer to God, culminate in Solomon “magnified,” who demands, “What can the man do that cometh after the king?”

In the first part of this paper, we observe how prominent was the sin-offering, when the question had to be settled, how God made a people His own; but now we shall learn, that our associations with Him must be maintained, or our acceptance in “the sweet savor” of Christ. “And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings... for all Israel, and did eat and drink before the Lord on that day with great gladness,” and they made Solomon the son of David king the second time and Zadok to be priest.” God is thus establishing His own relations with this people, called out from the iron bondage of Pharaoh, and the flesh-pots of Egypt, to find in nearness to Himself and with Himself, the secret of all present joy and blessing.

Like every previous relation, in which God and man are first found, all promises fair. Let us give a backward glance at “the cool of the day” when the Creator and the creature were together in Eden, and again at Noah and his altar and the covenanted blessing with every living thing; or later, at the hosts of Israel and their triumphant song before the murmurs of the wilderness, in order to be on our guard at this new inauguration of the temple of Jehovah and its glory, brought into connection with the responsibilities of so great a king! Everything goes well and responds in tune with these new relations. Nothing remains but for Jehovah Himself to sanction the whole by His approval; nor will He hesitate to crown, as He alone can. “And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel; and bestowed on him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him.”

The second book of Chronicles will tell us of the actings of this king on “the throne of the Lord.” All that could mark and distinguish royalty has been given him; but God will challenge him as a man and say, “Ask what I shall give thee,” and bestow on him further the wisdom and knowledge that gave him the precedence as a man over his fellows. Thus God pours forth His resources upon this favored king and nation, refreshing Himself and them in these rich associations.

The building times may now safely begin, and the great foundations must be laid upon that eventful Mount Moriah (so full of moral meaning), which had taught Abraham and David their respective lessons; the first by an Isaac “received back from the dead in a figure,” and the last at “the threshing-floor of Ornan,” where mercy rejoiced against judgment as the angel's sword was sheathed forever by the command of the Lord. Nothing out of heaven could compare with these intimacies between the friend of God at this mystic mount in patriarchal times, nor between the man after God's own heart and this Moriah when the kingdom days were come.

What secure foundations of blessing and glory are here laid in figure! But what Christian, able rightly to divide the word of God, and taught no longer by type but in fact, dot s not see here the true foundation God has laid, which is Jesus Christ, and the shadow of that rock on which the Lord builds His Church, and against which the gates of hell shall not prevail? Who does not, moreover, discover in these types “the chief cornerstone in whom the whole building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord?” What new and precious associations are these between the risen Christ as Head, and His body on the earth, through the descended Spirit at Pentecost?

But to return. The building of the temple, the one object of every eye, heart, and hand, is finished, and the priests and Levites have brought into their place all that prefigured “God manifest in the flesh.” “And it came to pass when the priests were come out of the holy place and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth forever, that then the house was filled with a cloud.”

The relations between Jehovah and His own are now at their height of blessing from the center of God's dwelling place to the extremest bound of the habitable earth. The Queen of Sheba will come from its very ends to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and listen, look, and wonder, till, beholding the ascent by which he went up to the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her!

What shall we, who are children of another hope, and of another standing, say to these things? If Israel's God has shown His delights among the sons of men by coming down from the heavens, and forming these relations with Himself; how well may He challenge “eye, and ear, and heart of man to conceive what He has prepared for them that love Him” in these later times!

In brief, the Old Testament is the history of God come down to this world, and to men upon it, in the varying forms we have noticed; and the New Testament is the record of man (in the person of Christ) gone up into the heavens. We know Him who is there to prepare a place for us; and He has promised “I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may he also.” Let us bear in mind, these two characteristic differences of the Old and New Testament, that we may discern “the manifold wisdom of God,” opened out by the ministry of the prophets first, and fulfilled in the Messiah Son of David according to the flesh, when in the midst of Israel.

Observe, we must not confound this with the other ministry of the Holy Ghost by the apostles, which reveals to us a second man, first-begotten from the dead, and now Head of His body the Church. Incarnation brought Him into this world, and gave Him to the hopes of His earthly people; but resurrection was the point of His departure for the heavens, where He gives Himself to us—the birth-place of all our hopes and their fulfillments.

How well may we bid defiance to every fear, now that Christ is on the throne of the Majesty on high, and encourage one another in the largest expectations of our souls, as taught by His own words: “All that the Father hath is mine.” May we increasingly find our repose and rest of heart, where God has found His, in the Son of His love.

Chapter 101

Immortality and Everlasting Punishment

My Dear Brother,-As this question, this evil heresy, is the one by which, most commonly just now, Satan seeks to perplex the minds of the simple, I write a line to you in connection with the tract sent to me. A great many human names are introduced, but scripture is little inquired into. In this doctrine the great point of consequence to me is that the true character and import of sin, of atonement, of repentance, is overlooked, and the responsibility of man. Atonement is either denied or dropped out. Here it is entirely dropped out. Now it is evident, if temporary punishment is the whole desert of sin, Christ had only to suffer accordingly. Repentance is proportionate. And one of the chief teachers in the United States declares in his book that the deep distress of conscience and terror about sin committed, was a base servile fear and wrong. To one who found he had lost the atonement and the sense of responsibility out of his mind, and who asked him what he made of responsibility, he replied, it was impossible to reconcile it with his system, but he saw it in scripture, and so did not deny it. They insist that souls of men and beasts are the same, and plead Genesis to this end—all in whom was the breath of life perished in the flood—that beasts have a living soul and so has man. If this be so (that we have more intelligence, but a living soul like a beast's), you cannot charge a beast with sin, nor make Christ die to put away a beast's sins. What did Christ do for us? not as giving life, but in the way of atonement? That is the grave question. Again, they confound eternal life and immortality, which is not honest.

Save as to the immortality of God, where it declares death, of course, has no part, ■θανασ■α, mortality and immortality as to men, are applied solely to the body and have nothing to do with eternal life. Eternal life is what we have in the Second Adam: the question is the condition of the first. Thus, “when this mortal shall have put on immortality,” “the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh.” The places are these—Rom. 6:12, “mortal body;” 8:11, “mortal bodies;” 1 Cor. 15:53, “this mortal;” verse 54, where it is the resurrection, that is, the body (or change); 2 Cor. 4:11, “our mortal flesh;” v. 4, “mortality swallowed up of life,” when he speaks of the tabernacle we are groaning in. Mortality is always of the body, immortality is put in contrast with mortality (not mortality of the soul, but of your present mortal condition). 1 Cor. 15:53, 54, is the change from a mortal state. Otherwise it is used only of God. In 1 Tim. 6:16, He is undying in nature. Mortal is applied to our present state, but is not applied to the soul at all. That God only has immortality does not affect an undying existence conferred; for angels are not mortal, as all admit, and as Luke 20:36 shows. With these and the state of the fallen angels these teachers never trouble themselves. Men must not suffer, their love goes no farther than themselves. Now the everlasting punishment is prepared for the devil and his angels, and there the judged of Matt. 25 are sent; so Rev. 20:10, 15; 21:8.

As to the life we have naturally, beasts were formed by God's word out of the ground, and there the ordinary creation ended, and then beasts were pronounced good. (Gen. 1:25.) And then God proceeds in solemn consultation to form man as His image, as lord of all that had been created, and in His likeness; and first makes him a frame out of the dust, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man by partaking of what came directly from God became a living soul (not at all as the beasts), God's image on the earth. Hence he is called (Acts 17) His offspring. He has a

spirit as well as a mere soul, when the distinction needs to be made, which death does not touch. We are not to fear them which kill the body and after that have no more that they can do—that death does not touch what is besides bodily life. I will speak of “destroy” in good time; but death leaves the soul in existence, not merely the souls of saints. When the resurrection was called into question by the Sadducees, it is not said of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob only that they are alive, nor is this founded on their being saints, though they were such, but it is added, “for all live unto him.” Death does not affect the soul. All live, not for man indeed on the earth but, for God.

The case of Lazarus and Dives clearly teaches the same solemn truth; the sinner was as much alive as the saint. They allege that this is a Jewish figure, I admit it fully as to the form; but it is not a figure of a person's not existing. The second death is the lake of fire—is punishment. They allege that it burns man out in time, and that ceasing to exist is the second death; but scripture says the punishment is itself the second death. Death never means ceasing to exist.

Then as to this word “everlasting.” It is incontrovertible that its proper sense is everlasting. It is defined carefully to mean it by Aristotle and Philo (the last a religious Jewish writer of the apostles' age) and others. Scripture speaks of the eternal God, the eternal Spirit, the eternal inheritance, eternal redemption; and what makes it conclusively evident that the word in itself means it is the statement of the apostle in 2 Cor. 4: “The things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are not seen are eternal,” where it is used in express contrast with temporal, without any subject (as they allege) which on other grounds shows what it means. So eternal life and eternal punishment are used in direct contrast—eternal life is in Christ, the gift of God. It is only named twice in the Old Testament, and both refer to the millennium (Dan. 12; Psa. 133); for life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel. In Rom. 2:7 it is incorruptibility, not immortality.

None of the quotations following, apply to the subject at all, I have eternal life now; yet I am as mortal as ever. That life is not touched in any way when I die. (2 Cor. 5:6-8.) It is in full glory when I get a glorious body; mortality or immortality it has nothing to do with, nor they with it. It is “life and incorruptibility” which are brought to light by the gospel. There is a resurrection of the unjust as of the just. They subsist meanwhile, or there is no one to raise; their judgment comes after their death. At any rate eternal life does not touch or take away mortality—has nothing to do with it, nor does it give immortality. It is only the darkness of common doctrine that has given rise to these statements, which have no real foundation at all. “All live unto him.” Destroying the body does not touch the soul. “Who only hath immortality” does not apply to created existence. The angels are not mortal as we are, but they have no existence independent of God any more than we have.

Dr. Whately is wrong altogether— “of those only,” he says, “who shall,” &c. Now it is not so. Immortality is only used twice, applied only to the body, and when it has ceased to be mortal.

Another thing important to remark here is the abuse of the word “die.” We may be quite right in seeing, as spiritual persons, that men may be dead while they live, and that we may be dead in sin, as towards God, when alive, and that the judgment of death implies estrangement from God; as the gift of life is bringing us, in principle, in blessedness to Him. But dying in its positive sense is never applied to the soul. Thus Ezek. 18, constantly quoted for this, and used by good people with good intentions, speaks only of death in this world—present judgment here; not for a father's, but for our own sins.

Quoting such a passage as “He that hath not the Son of God hath not life” proves utter confusion of mind; for if I were a living sinner, I have not life in that sense, yet am alive all the same; and if I never died at all, was not mortal as to the body, should not have it a bit more. What lost life has the sinner no power to regain? Not the fact of life (i.e., conscious existence); he has it as much as ever. It does not touch the question; and I know from Christ's word that death to which I am sentenced does not affect the soul. Why so diligently confound spiritual life and actual existence? And this is the whole secret of the way they puzzle people—poor work! Death as judgment on man may intimate a great deal more, just as life does. But “thou shalt surely die” was bringing in mortality; and hence man was not allowed to touch the tree of life lest he should eat and live forever—live forever as a sinner in the world. Here, as a matter of fact, God was not precluding him from getting spiritual life; and if when actually alive, as he was, he had eaten of the other tree, he would not have died at all. Immortality in his then state, before or after the fall, would have been immortality as a living man as he then was. The death threatened we have plainly declared to us—“Till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Did the spirit God breathed into Adam come out of the dust? It returns to God who gave it; and the body will be raised, and then judgment come, and only then the award of sin by judgment. The corruption of the body is only an intermediate state, common alike to saints and sinners, just as death itself is, save by special intervention of God's power.

As to union with the Savior giving life, it is all a blunder. It has no such effect. None but already quickened ones are united, and that by the Holy Ghost. I need not say that all he speaks of the end of all things at a common resurrection is no part of our belief; but it is one of the acts of Satan to take fresh light and use it, where it has not been, to pour in his darkness.

The statement of everlasting punishment to a simple soul is as plain as possible in scripture:

“These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into everlasting life.” To a simple soul it would be monstrous to say that “everlasting” was not meant to mean the same thing. They are “tormented forever and ever.” Death gives up all it held into the lake of fire—that is, forever and ever; the same word always used in that book for God's existence. They are “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.” Now everlasting destruction has no sense if non-existence be meant by destruction. Total destruction I understand; but everlasting destruction in such a sense, is nonsense. And in this case, on their own theory, it is no destruction then at all; for 2 Thess. 1 is at the beginning of the millennium, when, according to their own system, and my own full conviction, they are not destroyed at all, This leads me to the word “destroy.” It is, like death, used for the ruin of a present state of things, even moral ruin, not for cessation of existence. “O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help.” “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” —the same word. “He that loseth (destroyeth) his life for my sake, shall save it.” “Carest thou not that we perish?” Zacharias “perished between the temple and the altar.” Take an English-Greek Concordance, and you will easily see. So destruction; waste of the ointment; the son of perdition; damnable heresies—heresies which ruin people. Moral ruin is meant as well as destruction of existence, if that is ever meant. The world of the flood perished—the flood came and destroyed them all; yet they are spirits in prison after that—another proof that death destroys no soul; does not mean it. Abaddon and Apollyon are the Hebrew and Greek for destroyer: are they able to make to cease to exist finally? Take ■■■, p. 8, Engl. Hebr. Cone. I do not think “destroy” is ever used for finally ceasing to exist, but totally ruining

as to the state anything has been in. When men are everlastingly destroyed from the presence of the Lord, it confessedly is not so; they then go into punishment; but that is final. And when it is said, “their fire is not quenched,” to assert that it means that they do not exist at all is a miserable come-off, not more. It is a figure, no one denies, and refers, as is stated, to Isaiah; but the figure is one of the continuous existence of the objects of punishment. “From one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord; and they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me, for their worm shall not die neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” It is continuing abiding objects of punishment which are now before the eyes of those who come up. It was not a supply of fresh material, &c. All this is false. The opposite is what God is teaching. It is of continued existence; it is the carcasses that were indestructible—at any rate undestroyed: an external matter, no doubt, in Isaiah, and used by the Lord as a figure, but a figure of continued shame and misery, and no fresh supply. And what is the meaning of everlastingly supplying hell, where body and soul are, with fresh materials? “Destroyed forever” (Psa. 92:7), applies to this world; so Psa. 104:35, “Consumed out of the earth.” You may take it as a general rule, that in the Old Testament, judgment, destruction, &c., refer to this world, though a future state is referred to in the Psalms.

Again, the passage “Seek for glory, honor, and immortality” is incorruptibility. God is immortal in His present existence—cannot die. Man is looked at, when spoken of as such, as body and soul, and now mortal in that condition; and mortality is used only in respect of his existence in the body, and immortality too, only in another state. In Rom. 2:7 and 2 Tim. 1:10, it is incorruptibility; but it is always a state in the body, now mortal, then immortal (i.e., the soul separable from the body or inseparable). It does not touch the question, though habit uses it for it. Ignorance or dishonesty can alone quote the word. Angels are acknowledged to be immortal—and what we have to do is to learn from scripture what becomes of that which was directly communicated from God when He breathed into his nostrils, and which, most certainly from scripture, death does not touch.

I have already said eternal life has nothing to do with it; I am as mortal when I have it as before. Now scripture is positive that death does not touch the soul. It subsists after death and apart from the body. There could not in their use of it be a second death if it meant ceasing to exist. Death does not mean for men ceasing to exist; neither does the second death. That is going into the lake of fire, not getting out of it. And this driving out of the presence of the Lord is forever; punishment is everlasting. When dead, all live for God; when raised, they are cast into the lake of fire, and that is the second death, and the final state spoken of. They shall then have their part in it. That is “forever and ever” —the term used for the duration of God's own life; and the duration of His glory. (Rev. 4:9; 5:13, 14.) It is exclusion from the presence and dwelling-place of God: “Without are dogs,” &c. The time when God is all in all, and no more death, sorrow, &c., is the time when the evil are cast into the lake of fire. For death is separation of soul and body, which will never take place again. There will be no more dying, but just punishment on the raised wicked, but no more death; that and hades are over. But that judgment is destruction from the presence of the Lord.

What they specially insist on is that, till we get eternal life, we have, though more intelligent, life like any other animal. Now the falseness of this is evident. So we have seen, we are God's offspring, but I speak of it for another purpose now. I have a conscience; I have a soul that can hate God and did—formed to have to say to Him—that can be rebellious and disobedient, and

enter into appeals to my conscience. In a word, I am a moral being. When I am converted, I feel how I have failed as to my previous responsibility; I repent, I feel I am guilty—liable to judgment from God: what has this to do with animal life? If I get eternal life, it makes me look backward on all my previous course as guilt, as subjecting me to divine punishment. When I know myself, I know that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. God claims moral authority over the unconverted man. For these sins Christ, I find, has died. I was dead in sins. In Him I have died to sin. If I am a mere nephesh chayah,, as they speak (and we are that physically), I cannot repent nor think of atonement for what I did as such. The idea of sin is lowered. All there is is merely a temporary punishment for certain faults which takes place now and also hereafter. For scripture it is enmity against God, and the remaining so is infinite misery, when the veil of sense is taken away and final judgment pronounced. The atonement, responsibility, the true sense of sin, repentance, all go when this fatal falsehood and device of Satan gets into the mina. It is a soul as to its nature capable of hatred and love of God. Would you put the cleverest elephant into this place of responsibility? or could it have a need for its sins to be borne?

If you deal with a simple soul, show it the plain language of scripture: “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” Conscience will tell what that means, and if they have been dealt with to prove eternal does not mean eternal, show them what is said in 2 Cor. 4:18; and simple souls, souls where Satan's wiles have not polluted them, will bow to the plain word of God. I have nothing to do with popular statements (though better, if essentially sound, than these immoral deceits); but the conscious subsistence of the soul after death, and eternal judgment and punishment of the wicked, are as plainly taught in scripture as possible. Men have spoken of it (though sound in intentions) in a way designing people can lay hold of, specially from the Lord's coming not having been seen. But the word of God is clear. It does not detail the misery as it does the blessing, and this is its perfection; but it declares it, and this is right. “I am” is essential existence. No other word is used for the duration of God's existence which is not used for that of the punishment and torment of the wicked. And while a few persons have been scandalized who seek their own thoughts and take their own feelings, when there is no just sense of what their own sins have deserved (for this is the secret of it), how many thousands of thousands have been awakened by the just terror of judgment?

I write thus to you because you will have to say to it. I have not entered into all, nor could in this letter. Save a few misapplied texts, there is no serious investigation of scripture, as bearing on a responsible soul, the offspring of God—no sense of what sin is, and that is the evil of the matter.—Affectionately yours in Christ, J. N. D.

Chapter 102

Inspiration: Ecclesiastes Dictated

From two opposite points of view is life on earth generally regarded by mankind. The one half view it as a prospect opening out before them; the other half take a retrospective survey of all they have passed through. Like the cloudless morning of a long summer's day does it appear to one just emerging out of childhood, as radiant with hope he starts forth on his journey to realize the dream of his boyhood. Like the gloomy end of a winter's day does it appear to many a one, who has reached the verge of that span ordinarily allotted to man on earth, as chastened and bowed down, it may be, with the remembrance of failures, the old man travels onward to the tomb. Each has formed an estimate of what life here is, but the one speaks of what he hopes for, the other tells of that which he has found. A man's idea of a road he has riot yet traveled on will often turn out to be wrong; so youth's estimate of life is generally fallacious. Can we trust to one who has traveled the road himself to give us a just idea of what life on earth really is? Each one can tell us of what he has found, and may seek to indoctrinate us with his own idea; but the picture will be differently colored, according to the trials or joys each has met with by the way. It will be but the experience of all individual after all.

Man wants something more. Where shall he find it? The wisdom of the ancients cannot supply it; the researches of those who have lived in our day cannot furnish us with it. It needs one gifted with real wisdom to estimate it; it needs one able to search diligently into the things of earth to discover it. One and one only of the children of Adam has been competent for the task, and he as competent has undertaken to perform it. What David, the man after God's own heart, could not have accurately delineated, that Solomon his son could and did; and the Book of Ecclesiastes is the utterance of the Preacher, dictated by the Spirit of God, to provide man authoritatively from God, but also experimentally by the wisest of men, with a just estimate of what life here below for a child of Adam really is. Endowed by God with a measure of wisdom surpassing all before him (“for he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mabel.” 1 Kings 4:31), and never equaled by any that have come after him, king in Jerusalem, possessed of wealth beyond any monarch the world has ever seen (“for silver was not anything accounted of in the days of Solomon"), all that wealth could purchase, all that power could command, all that wisdom could search out, he could enjoy and understand. “What,” then, “can the man do that cometh after the king?” “Who can eat, or who else can hasten (or enjoy) more than I?” (Eccl. 2:12, 25.)

This was no idle boast. A man of pleasure, a votary of science, the ruler over kings, meting out justice to his subjects, answering all the hard questions of the Queen of Sheba, fertile in invention, diligent in study, rich in all that constituted the wealth of a nomad, pastoral, or settled, and highly civilized people—what source of pleasure was sealed up to him, what field of knowledge on earth was kept from him? Of all the pleasures that man can revel in he had drunk deep, while at the same time he investigated the works of God, and learned those laws by which the life and order of the universe are regulated. And, when we speak of Solomon's wisdom, we must remember it was not mere genius as people talk of, nor the fruit of matured study and diligent attention; but God

gave him wisdom and knowledge, besides riches, wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings had that had been before him, neither shall any after him have the like. (2 Chron. 1:12.) Such was the one appointed to depict faithfully what the life on earth of a fallen creature is, and only can be; as One and One alone, who has trod this earth as man, has rightly and fully exhibited what man should be. David's son describes the one; David's Lord has set forth the other.

The Book of Ecclesiastes then is of great value, and might profitably be studied by men of the world in our day. Its writer had no reason to bear a grudge against the world: as men would say, it had used him well, conceding him his place, paying him due honor, and rendering full homage to his marvelous wisdom. For “king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom that God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.” (2 Chron. 9:22-24.)

Competent then surely to tell us what life is, what has he to say of it? how does he describe it? “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; vanity of vanities: all is vanity.” (Eccl. 1:1.) Were these the words of a disappointed man, whose hopes had been cruelly crushed, and himself roughly treated by the way, none could wonder at such a commencement. But these are the words of the most prosperous, humanly speaking, of men the world has ever witnessed. “Vanity of vanities” —a mere breath, a vapor passing over the earth, short-lived in its existence, such is the recorded experience of the son of David, king in Jerusalem, and that not of some things but of all. “All is vanity, saith the Preacher.” And here he takes a title not elsewhere met with outside this book—Preacher. He would collect those about him who were desirous to hear, and instruct them, for such is the meaning of the term. So, whilst other portions of Scripture treat of the future, and the path of the righteous on earth, this addresses itself to all whose hearts are in the world, pursuing the occupations of life, and tells them what they really are, as the Icing's son has discovered by his own experience, and has recorded by the pen of inspiration for the instruction of all who will hearken to him.

“What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?” He takes up the diligent, well-occupied man, toiling away; the man who finds plenty to do and is happy in doing it, thoroughly engaged in the business of life. But why this cry of the Preacher, who “sought to find out acceptable words?” (Chap. 12:10.) And why does he view things so mournfully? The secret comes out. “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever.” The earth abides, man does not; hence the question that needs no answer, “What profit,” &c. And here we are furnished with a view of death, of which it is well for man to be reminded. Death is the wages of sin; but it is not viewed in this aspect in Ecclesiastes. It is not the reason of its entrance into the world that Solomon dilates on, but its presence here as a worm at the root of the tree of pleasure. (Chap. 2:15; 3:19, 20; 5:15; 6:6; 9:3.) It mars pleasure, it chills enjoyment; for it cuts off man just when he would sit down after years of toil to reap the fruit of his labor. How different was the prospect of Adam ere he fell! How different will be the experience of saints during the millennium, and of men on the new earth! But now to man, feeling the consequences of the fall, death is the great marplot, blasting all his hopes. What takes place after death is another matter: other scriptures set that forth. This book regards death from this side of the grave, and shows how it effects a severance between man and the fruits of all his labor, which he thinks he is just about to reap. And the misery of it is just this: man has labored for years, and looks naturally to

enjoy what he, not others, has amassed; but finds death comes in and takes him away, whilst he leaves all the fruits of his labor to be enjoyed by another. “There is a man whose labor is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity: yet to a man that hath not labored therein shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil.” (Chap. 2:21.)

What a trouble then is death, an unwelcome visitor, which none can keep out of their house. It comes unbidden, it comes at an unseasonable time in man's eyes, and strips its victim of everything; for “as he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath labored for the wind?” (Chap. v. 15, 16.) And whatever his position on earth, all finally go to one place (chap. 6:6), the rich, the poor, the wise, the fool, the righteous, the wicked are found at last with the untimely birth, which has never seen the sun. And death, the great leveler of all ranks, reduces man to a level below himself, even to that of the beasts; “for that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts: even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.” (Chap. 3:19, 20.) With the thread of man's life thus unrolling before him, at one end of it his exit from the womb, at the other his exit from the world by death, all that is seen being the transient existence of a metal born to die, we can understand the reason of that cry, “What profit hath a man,” &c.

But, if death deprives a man of the enjoyment of the fruits of his toil, his life and all that surrounds him speaks of ceaseless and reiterated labor. The work begun is never perfected. Things in heaven and things on earth proclaim this. “The sun ariseth, and the sun goeth down and hasteth to his place where he arose, going toward the south, and turning again to the north” (thus some connect ver. 5, 6). Each day the work is done only to be repeated again the next. Each year, the course it has traversed, is traversed again. “The wind,” too, “whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to its circuits.” The rivers are ever running to the sea, “yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come thither they return again,” or perhaps better, “unto the place where the rivers go, thither they turn to go.” “All things are full of labor; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.” Thus nature would teach him, if he regarded it aright, that here as yet no abiding rest can be enjoyed. Life is a busy scene. What has been will be, and there is nothing new under the sun. And to complete the picture of vanity, “there is no remembrance of former things, neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.” The obliviousness in Solomon's days of what had gone before was not a feature peculiar to his time. It has, it will characterize man in all ages. What profit then is there in the labor of man? What has been done will be done again, and what has been effected will be forgotten by the generations which may come after.

With this as the preface to his book, the Preacher proceeds to show that he writes not from hearsay, nor culls the wisdom of others, but has tried for himself what life under the sun is for one of the human race. (Chap. 1:12-2:26.)

He set himself resolutely to the task of searching out by wisdom all things that are done under the sun. In this he made good use of that wonderful gift God had bestowed on him. He beheld them all, “and behold,” he writes, “all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” Man may see the defects, be

conscious of the want, but he cannot supply it. What a condition to be in! Such is man's condition on earth as one who has departed from God. He must feel keenly, if he feels at all, how bitter are the results of turning from the living and true God. He sees what is crooked, discerns what is wanting, but cannot put things straight, nor supply that which is lacking. “All the foundations of the earth are out of course” are the words of Asaph. “All is vanity and vexation of spirit” is the experience of the king's son. And this, we must remember, is not the experience of the sinner, reaping the fruit of what he has sown, but one of the old creation (though a sinner himself) feeling the ruin and disorder sin has brought on the earth, As originally created by God, man was meant to find unalloyed delight on earth, with a nature capable of enjoyment, a mind capable of instruction and expansion, and a frame capable of exertion; and everything around him would have ministered to his pleasure, or have afforded opportunities for the full development of his faculties. Is that the case now? Let us listen to the words of the Preacher again: “I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem, yea my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.” (Chap. 1:16-18.) This is human experience, yet not the experience which of necessity a man must have, but the experience of all men, who are still suffering under the consequences of the fall. And however great man may be on earth, whatever be the powers of his mind or the yearnings of his heart, he cannot as a child of Adam get beyond what is here described. Like some fair ruin, with here and there traces of exquisite workmanship still remaining, by which we can contrast the evident design of the architect with the present condition of the building, so we can discern in man's feelings and powers what he was originally capable of, whilst compelled to own he is but a wreck of that noblest of God's works first seen on the sixth day of creation.

But whence did he acquire that experience which enabled him to pronounce such a verdict on all the pursuits of men under the sun? He tells us: “I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth: therefore enjoy pleasure; and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine [yet acquainting, or guiding mine heart with wisdom] and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits; I made me pools of water to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees; I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me; I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces; I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts [or as it might be rendered, and perhaps more correctly, a wife and wives,' i.e., many wives]. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my portion of all my labor.” (Chap. 2:1-10.) Such was the wide range of pleasures intellectual and carnal that he explored. Nothing was withheld of any joy; but whilst entering so keenly into all that he describes, he tells us his wisdom remained with him. Fully competent then was he from personal experience,

and from the wisdom which never forsook him, to estimate aright what all this was worth. Would not such a one be satisfied with what this life afforded? If others less favored were disappointed, he at least had his fill of everything he desired. And, having drunk deep of all that could be indulged in, he has left on record what he found it all to be. “Behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.” The value of wisdom he discerned; it “excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness;” but to the fool as well as to the wise death comes, and after death the fool and wise are forgotten, yea, the wise man dieth as the fool. Hence he hated life, and he hated all the labor which he had labored under the sun, because he must leave it to the man that shall be after him; and who knoweth, he mournfully asks, whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? History answers the question, and illustrates forcibly the vanity of all things which he felt so keenly. Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men that had stood before Solomon his father, and lost by his act of folly the allegiance of the ten tribes. He forsook also the Lord after three years of his reign had elapsed, witnessed the invasion of Shishak king of Egypt, and lost the treasures Solomon had amassed. The shields of gold went to swell the coffers of Egypt, and Rehoboam had to substitute shields of brass in their stead. From speaking of himself, Solomon turns to others; and taking a survey of all things done under the sun, declares all is vanity.

Of wealth he speaks. It has its use. Money is a defense (chap. 7:12), it is God's gift; yet how often do men feel the vanity of it all. Coveted, toiled after as the one great good, the man acquires wealth, fills his coffers, and yet is unsatisfied. If childless, we may desire offspring, but children are God's gift, not to be purchased by money. If he loves silver, he will not be satisfied with it. (Chap. 5:10,) How can things of earth really satisfy an immortal spirit? If he feasts his eyes with his money to-day, it may vanish away shortly, and he be left with an heir—his own child—born to inherit beggary. (Ver. 13, 14.) Again, if he has been prospered to the last, and his riches have not fled away, he must leave them; for as he entered the world, so must he leave it. Death summons him but not his goods with him. All that he has remains behind him, whilst he, naked as he entered the world, passes out of it by the portal of death. Riches cannot satisfy the soul, they cannot buy off death, nor can their owner insure their retention for the morrow. So Solomon admonishes his fellow-creatures, “What profit hath he that hath labored for the wind?”

Again the Preacher speaks and discourses about wisdom. He acknowledged its value, for none were more competent than he was to speak of it. It strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city. It is better than strength, he could say: and better than weapons of war. (Chap. 7:11-19; 9:16, 18.) But here also the vanity of all things done under the sun made itself felt; for when he applied his heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done on the earth, as he turned to behold the works of God, he found a limit to the prosecution of his researches; and as he surveyed the works of men, he was only made more painfully conscious of the wretchedness and ruin brought in by sin.

Of the works of creation he had learned a great deal, as is elsewhere recorded; but man is but a finite being, unable to fathom the infinite. This Solomon discovered. “I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labor to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, farther, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.” (Chap. 7:17.) There are fields of knowledge beyond man's capacity to explore or even reach. He may, like Solomon, arrive at this point, to learn from all he knows how little he knows; how knowledge acquired is the mother of many a question which the student is unable to

answer; and how incompetent he is to understand even all that he sees around him. Such must ever be his condition here. By the light of revelation we can look onward to a day when we shall, but not down here, “know as we are known.”

Turning to investigate the actions of men, he may learn the evils that are done under the sun: the crying injustice, the lawlessness, the frauds, and many acts of oppression that are constantly practiced amongst men, to find, whilst he sees them, his powerlessness to hinder them. (Chap. 3:16: 8:14.) Another arm is alone able to restrain the lawless; another mind than any of Adam's fallen descendants can alone devise the remedy. The day of the Son of man must dawn ere One will be found on earth competent to put things straight. How often is justice now perverted! The righteous suffer, and the guilty go free. Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in a low place. Servants ride on horses, and princes walk as servants on earth. (Chap. 10:6, 7.) And the wise man, courted for his help in time of pressing need, is forgotten when the hour of distress has passed away. (Chap. 9:1, 5.) Thus wisdom may disclose to its possessor what is wrong, and make him feel the bitterness of it, sensible all the time of his powerlessness to correct it. To know good and evil was the bait held out by the serpent, to be just like God. The wise man sees clearly the evil, knows what ought to be, but learns he cannot do it. And woman, originally God's provision for man, his suited help, is found to become, when a tool of the enemy, an instrument for his everlasting ruin. (Chap. 7:26-29.)

After this we may be prepared for the picture presented at the close of the book. Man, created origin. ally in the image of God, not subject to death, is depicted as traveling onwards to the tomb; learning as he goes along, as we have seen, that all around of things done under the sun are vanity; and, at the close of his life, giving in his own death a most convincing proof of the accuracy of the Preacher's statement— “All is vanity.” Beautiful is the poetry of the description, but sad are the features of it. Whilst others may love to describe what man might have been, Solomon tells us what he is; but he speaks not of his greatness, his powers of mind or body; he writes of decay. Created to be lord of God's creatures on earth, manifesting the power of mind over matter; a pigmy by the side of the everlasting hills, yet able to accomplish gigantic works, which seem almost to defy the ravages of time; far inferior to many of the animals in brute strength, yet able to subdue them, and to make the forces of nature subservient to his will; what might he not have been had sin not entered the world? A worn out vessel, his strength decayed, his knees tottering, his hands trembling, his sight failing, his ears dull of hearing; all that once charmed him able to charm him no longer; a mere wreck of what he was, awaiting the hour of his departure to his long home: such is he as described by Solomon. Who will wonder that the burden with which he began is the burden with which he ends. “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity.” (Chap. 1:2; 12:8.)

But amid all that spoke of vanity there was another subject be touched on, for, being wise, he taught the people. He had spoken at length about man and his works, he speaks briefly about God and what He does. And what he says about God (for the name Jehovah does not occur in the book) only brings out in higher relief the ruined condition of man. Man abideth not, his thoughts perish, his works crumble to dust, his name is forgotten. Created originally not for death, he is now born to die: but God abides. “I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it.” (Chap. 3:14.) Here in the midst of what is transient is something permanent. This he had found and desired to impress on others. (Chap. 5:1-7; 11:9; 12:1.) He would tell the creature of the Creator. It is not grace that he is charged to proclaim; it is

not salvation he is empowered here to offer; but to God's creatures, responsible as such to Him that made them, he would speak. The Creator will take cognizance of, and make judicial inquiry into, the actions of His creatures. This none can escape, and of this all need to be reminded. And now that he has exposed the vanity of all things that are done under the sun, he opens out the only word for man to follow: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” (Chap. 12:13.) The fuller light that we possess confirms all that Solomon said of man, and tells us likewise more about God; but the principle here enunciated is true for all time—the creature should own the authority of God, and yield implicit obedience to all He is pleased to enjoin. “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

And just where Ecclesiastes ends, Proverbs begins. Ecclesiastes exposes the vanity of all things here; Proverbs tells us of true wisdom. Ecclesiastes lands man as man in decay and death; Proverbs holds out life, and tells us how to walk wisely on earth. In perfect keeping with this are the subjects of their closing chapters. What Ecclesiastes describes has been briefly referred to. What Proverbs speaks of, is man and woman in their respective spheres; the man, king Lemuel, ruling; the woman, the virtuous wife guiding the house wisely and well. We see them each in their work, but we read of no end to it. Death is not introduced as cutting short their career of usefulness, or carrying them away when helpless by old age. They exemplify what Solomon had taught his son would flow from the possession of that wisdom which is to be desired—life. And we close the book, feeling that we leave them, as it were, the one on the throne and the other in the house. We come to the end of the Book of Proverbs, but we leave them still in life and activity.

C. E. S.

Notes on Jeremiah 1

On the consideration of the second of the four great prophets we propose to enter. Here we are not in presence of the comprehensive scope of divine purpose such as we have seen in Isaiah; but we are about to deepen our acquaintance with one who yields to none in pathos. The sublime strains of his inimitable predecessor are not more suited to the magnificent visions which he was inspired to see and communicate than is the plaintive style of Hilkiah's son to his own solemn and touching commission.

Jeremiah began his prophetic ministry, as he intimates, in the thirteenth year of Josiah. the last godly king of Judah. It was the year which followed the first effort to purge the capital and the country from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. The fairness of the promise but added to the poignancy of his grief when the reformation turned out altogether superficial, and the ruin impending was only stayed, under God, so to speak, by the life of Josiah, who died at the age of 39. Then followed the deplorable reigns of Jehoahaz (=—Shallum), whom Pharaoh-Necho deposed, setting up Eliakim (=Jehoiakim); who was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin (=Jeconiah or Coniah), for whom Nebuchadnezzar soon substituted “his brother” (or, as we would say, his father's brother) Zedekiah (=Mattaniah). Under these kings the closing disasters of Jerusalem, were mixed up with the struggle between Egypt and Babylon, which ended in the indisputable world-sovereignty of the latter and the various stages of Judah's captivity. What juncture so suited to call out the exercises of such a heart as Jeremiah's ? These soul-trials, which the Holy Ghost wrought in, were, as far as circumstances and persons could be, the mold in which the various parts of the prophecy were cast.

As to form, no such book of scripture perhaps has more perplexed the critics, one of whom (Dr. Blayney) has dared to characterize it as a “preposterous jumbling together” of incoherent materials. Apparently from very early times the arrangement was found difficult, as we may gather from the strikingly different disposal of a large part that is exhibited in the Septuagint. They have been compared thus: —

LXX|Hebrew|

Chap. 25:14-18|Chap. 49:34-39|

Chap. 26|Chap. 46|

Chap. 27, 28|Chap. 50, 51|

Chap. 29:1-7|Chap. 47:1-7|

Chap. 29:7-22|Chap. 49:7-22|

Chap. 30:1-5|Chap. 49:1-6|

Chap. 30:6-11|Chap. 49:28-33|

Chap. 30:12-16|Chap. 49:23-27|

Chap. 31|Chap. 48|

Chap. 32|Chap. 25:15-39|

Chap. 33, 51|Chap. 26, 45|

Chap. 52|Chap. 52|

Dr. Blayney has sought to arrange the whole chronologically. Any such scheme will make it evident that neither the Hebrew original nor the version of the Seventy adheres throughout to the order of time.

I do not doubt that the Hebrew (as followed by the Authorized Version) was the order in which the book was left by the inspired editor (whether Ezra or Baruch matters little) who added the last chapter, which fitly terminates the prophecy, and serves as a preface for the appendix of the prophet's Lamentations. In short, it appears that the disregard of mere historical sequence subserves a moral order, which, as usual in scripture, has eluded the notice of those who look to no more than external points which lie on the surface.

Chapter 25 is a sort of link of transition between the first and last halves of the book. The early chapters were no doubt among the first utterances of the prophet, and are for the most part occupied with appeals to the conscience of the Jews, and warnings of the inevitable judgment of God just impending, though far from exhausted then. In that central chapter, the judgment is clearly predicted; and this judgment falls first on the land of Judah and all its neighbors; next, after seventy years' servitude to the king of Babylon, the day of divine visitation comes for the king of Babylon and the land of the Chaldeans. “And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all nations. For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. Then took I the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord hath sent me: To wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; as it is this day; Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people.” (Chap. 25:13—19.)

Thus evidently the chosen people are merged in the ruin and judgment of the nations, and only possess a title to come first in order to be chastised of God for their iniquities, so much the more guilty because of His favor and their privileges. This casts much light on the expression in the chapter that Jeremiah was ordained or made “a prophet unto the nations.” Whatever the secret counsels of divine grace, in the public government of God the moment was come for Judah to be Lo-Ammi (“not-my-people"). Surely God will in His mercy restore them for the latter-day blessing and glory; but meanwhile they fell through idolatry, after the most perfect patience on God's part, from their distinctive place as God's people in the earth—not forever indeed (for His gifts and call are without repentance), but for a time still in progress. “The times of the Gentiles,” and the

dispersion of Israel are the evident proofs of it.

Hence we may regard the Book of Jeremiah as divisible into two great and nearly equal parts: the first, up to chapter 25, consisting of moral appeals to the people; and the second, from that chapter, bringing in the particulars of the judgments on Israel and the nations among which they as it were disappeared, and in the midst of judicial dealing God remembering mercy and restoring them in virtue of the new covenant through His own unfailing grace.

Within these two main divisions there are, of course, lesser, though connected, sections. Thus chapter 1 is the prophet's call; chapters 2 - 6 go together, his first grave expostulation with the people. Chapters 7 - 10 begin with the house of God as the witness of the people's sin and the starting-point of His judgment; declare that Israel might take a lesson, in their inattention to the Lord, from the birds of heaven which observe their movements and seasons; and insist, though with the deepest grief on the prophet's part, that divine judgments must fall both on them and on the nations around them. Chapters 11 - 13 remind them of their fathers' covenant broken, so that intercession was vain, yet of restoring mercy at last, and close with a solemn denunciation of the proud iniquity of Judah. Chapters 14 & 15 mingle an acknowledgment of God's chastening in famine with the prophet's tears and confession for the people; but the Lord's assurance, that not Moses nor Samuel could turn Him towards those whom He had made up His mind to abandon and disperse. Chapters 16 & 17 separate the prophet from the people now, but assure of final blessing; show the value of trusting the Lord and call to repentance. Chapters 18 - 20 give a startling picture of religious hardness toward God, and hatred of the prophet who called them by the testimony of judgment as well as of his own deep conflict withal. Chapters 21 - 24 are remarkable in this way, that the Spirit takes occasion, by the overwhelming answer of the prophet to Zedekiah, to collect the various sentences on the successors of Josiah—Shallum, Jehoiakim, [Je]coniah. Woe on these destructive pastors is followed by Jehovah's promise of a righteous Branch to David. This, however, does not hinder present sternness of rebuke, but with discrimination of the righteous and the wicked, as set forth in the two baskets of figs. Chapter 25, though in fact an earlier message, winds up, as we saw, the first division, by declaring the intent of God to give all up to the king of Babylon, who in turn should be punished himself.

The second part consists far more of detached portions which give details. Thus, chapter xxvi., in the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, shows the effect of Jeremiah's calling them to repent of their sins that God might turn from the evil otherwise inevitable, the lay element, if one may so say, shielding their monitor from the priestly power. Chapters 27 & 28. bring us to the beginning of (not “Jehoiakim's,” which is an error of the copyists, but) Zedekiah's reign (of ver. 3, 12, 20 and chap. 28:1). God had acted sovereignly in the government of the world and warns, not the king of Judah only, but those round about, of the necessity of subjection to the king of Babylon. This was sealed in the death of Hananiah the false prophet. Chapter 29 declares the blessing of God on those who accepted the humiliation from His hand in the dominion of Babylon; such should find peace in seeking its peace while there. Those who prophesied otherwise were not divinely sent, and must be judged for their rebellion against the Lord. Chapters 30 & 31 prove that the Spirit does not limit the return from captivity to the remnant who went up from Babylon in the days of Cyrus, but looks onward to the unparalleled days of trouble, the time of Jacob's trouble which precedes his deliverance, when they shall serve not only Jehovah, but “David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.” The day of the Lord is contemplated, without doubt. Hence all the families of Israel

enter the blessing, instead of a remnant according to the election of grace, as now, or before Christ. These will be the days when all Israel shall be saved, and be placed under Messiah and the new covenant. Chapter 32 sets forth a present act on the prophet's part in evidence of their restoration—yea, of an everlasting covenant with them. Chapter 33 teaches that, when the Lord causes the captivity of Judah and of Israel to return, not only shall there be unexampled prosperity, but Messiah, the Branch of Righteousness, shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land, and Jerusalem itself be called Jehovah-tzidkenu; and as the King, so the priesthood; and all this forever. Chapter 34 renews the assurance of the imminent ruin of Jerusalem and Judah, and in detail. Chapter 35 contrasts the Rechabites, faithful to their father, with Judah's disobedience. Chapter 36 sets forth God's faithfulness in testimony spite of Jeremiah's imprisonment and Jehoiakim's destructive madness. Chapters 37 - 39 form another testimony to this in a different shape under Zedekiah. Appearances of good do not weaken God's word, nor do trifling circumstances impart security where He is not trusted. Chapters 40 - 44 testify similarly among those left behind when the final blow of the Chaldeans had fallen on Jerusalem: the people were as unbelieving and rebellious as the kings, and reap the due fruit of their sowing, whether in the land or in Egypt. Chapter 45 assures Baruch in his sorrow and shrinking, of God's sure judgments but of his own preservation meanwhile. Chapters 46 - 49 give the details of His dealings with the Gentiles in the land; as chapters 50 & 51. show us the imperial power of Babylon itself judged, the occasion and type of that which makes the way for Israel's return to the land and the Lord their God.

Chapter 52., though not the prophet's writing, fitly closes the book, furnishing the connection of the Chaldean with the king, the capital, and the temple. The Spoliation of the city and sanctuary was complete, and so was the captivity of the people. God had not failed in aught He had predicted of Babylon's supremacy, nor of the value of subjection to Babylon, the scourge of Judah's sin.

(Chap. 1)

BUT few words will suffice for the opening chapter, especially if the general scope of the prophecy has been apprehended. We have seen the extent of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry. (Ver. 1-3.) His call is then described in verses 4-10. He was a prophet sanctified to the nations, the people of God being on the point of losing their sanctification as His people, and all merged in common ruin and obnoxiousness to divine judgment. Serious charge to one of Jeremiah's tender feelings so strongly susceptible of grief and pity! But he must deliver it. “Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.” (Ver. 7-10.) Next, he is taught in symbols what was in store for him. (Ver. 11-16.) The almond rod set forth how God would hasten the performance of His word; the pot seething with its face northwards intimated the evil brewing thence for Jerusalem and Judah on account of their idolatries. “Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defensed city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against

thee: but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." (Ver. 17-19.) Out of weakness the prophet must be made strong to suffer, if not to do, in the testimony of God against His own people, the more painful because so loved and yet so guilty. His tender spirit must speak boldly against all, and so the Lord would deliver him: to shrink from it would ensure his confusion before them. What a deliverance from the fear of man is the fear of the Lord who deigns to be with His servant!

Notes on Jeremiah 2-6

The opening charge of the prophet to the people occupies these five chapters.

Chap. 2. Nothing can be more affecting than the Lord's appeal as He reminds them, as it were, of plighted troth and consecration to Jehovah at the beginning of their history. (Ver. 1-3.) Was it iniquity in the Lord that their fathers walked after vanity? Were they not willingly ignorant, who felt not His goodness in bringing them out of the furnace of Egypt, through the dreary desert, and into His good land, which they had made defiled and an abomination? (Ver. 4-7.) Nor were the priests, the pastors, or the prophets one whit better, but rather worse, or at least more conspicuous in their sin against Him. (Ver. 8.)

Next, how slow is the Lord to abandon His people, pleading with those before Him then, to their children's children! Go where they pleased—north-west or south-east, to Greeks or to Arabians: they would hear of none so false to their false gods as Israel to the true God. Well might the heavens be amazed and afraid and greatly wasted, at the sight of God's people guilty of two such evils: forsaking Him, the fountain of living waters, to hew them out cisterns, broken cisterns that hold not the waters! (Ver. 9-13.)

And why such exposure to enemies? Was Israel a slave from without or one born at home, that he should suffer the grossest wrong and indignity even from those they most trusted—the sons of Noph and Tahapanes—feeble as they were? Jehovah forsaken was Israel's punishment and shame. What had they to do with drinking of the Egyptian river or of the Assyrian? They must yet learn the bitterness of abandoning the Lord their God. (Ver. 14-19.) Of old they had been set free, and promised obedience, but turned to all licentiousness. God had failed in no case: the fault was their own, their stain indelible. (Ver. 20-22.) Self-righteous were they, yet swift to do evil and irreclaimable, given up to others hopelessly (ver. 23-25), and as palpably as a thief caught in the very act; and this, not the masses only, but their kings, their heads, and their priests, and their prophets, saying to a stock, My father art thou, and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth. In their trouble they might turn to God with Arise and save us; but God challenges their gods to arise if they can save them. It was from no lack of number alas! for Judah's gods were as many as their cities. In vain did they excuse themselves. They were all guilty, and far from accepting Jehovah's correction, their own sword had devoured their prophets. (Ver. 26-30.) The prophet closes this appeal on the Lord's part by asking if He had been a desert or land of darkness to Israel that they came no more to Him, forgetting Him unnaturally and continually, and teaching the wicked their ways, and with the most evident blood-guiltiness yet pretending to innocence. And truly it was but a shift of sin. It had been Assyria, it was now Egypt: but shame and sorrow would be the lot of their depraved affections.

Chap. 3 God, however, is nowhere more Himself than in His pitiful mercy to His fallen people. A man could not take back the wife who had deserted him for another. “Israel had committed fornication with many lovers: yet return again to me, saith the Lord.” He points out their frequent and shameless unfaithfulness, calling Him withal the father and guide of their youth. But whatever

they said, they persevered in evil-doing. (Ver. 1-5.) Israel's uncleanness was notorious, and God had called her back in vain; but Judah was yet more treacherous, despised the warning with better knowledge, and sinned yet more audaciously. (Ver. 6-11.)

In the face of all the prophet is bid say, “Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: and I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.” (Ver. 12-18.) It is in vain to refer such language as this to the past. Such interpretations not only mislead as to the drift of the passage itself, but do the far greater damage of enfeebling all scripture in the eyes of those who accept them. For if God can exaggerate or fail as to one point, how can His word be trusted absolutely anywhere else? Apply such a prediction to the future, when, beginning with ever so small a gathering from this or that place, God will bring back His people to Zion, and the new order will far outshine the past, and Jerusalem be His throne, a center for all nations, and the long-divided houses of Judah and Israel be re-united once more and forever, not in another world, or after a mystical sort, but in the land given for an inheritance to their fathers. But it will be no mere external resuscitation of Israel. They will truly repent and cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. (Ver. 12-19.)

The rest of this chapter (ver. 20-25) resumes the appeal to the conscience of the people; and the prophet replies in their name with a confession of their sins.

Chapter 4 summons the people to return to the Lord, and this in truth of heart, lest His fury break forth and burn like fire. Let the trumpet assemble to the defensed cities; for destruction comes from the north. It is Nebuchadnezzar. “The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; and thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant. For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the Lord is not turned back from us. And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the Lord, that the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes; and the priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder.” (Ver. 7-9.) Again: “Behold he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind; his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled.” (Ver. 13.) The prophet next tells Jerusalem plainly that these bitter things befall her for her sins; and then pours out the lamentation of his own anguished heart at the horrors impending over the guilty but beloved city and land. (Ver. 19- 31.)

Chap. 5. Yet was it most just. Righteousness was sought in vain throughout the streets and broadways; profanity was everywhere. And what would be the result under the righteous government of God? “Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces: because their transgressions are many, and their backslidings are increased.” (Ver. 6.)

How should the Lord pardon Jerusalem for this? Could He reward His own dishonor? Could He sanction the grossest depravity? Nevertheless, the judgment was to be measured, even though they belied the Lord and His chastenings. (Ver. 7-18.)

Nor would it be only desolation and death in the land, but the people should serve strangers in a foreign land, even as they had forsaken Jehovah and served strange gods in their own land. They were revolted and gone in heart already. “Shall I not visit for these things? [recounting their iniquities] saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” is the twofold witness of the prophet. (Ver. 9-29.) People, prophets, priests, loved falsehood together.

Chap. 6. This concluding portion of the charge adds to the terrors of the scene, first, by the call to the Benjamites to quit the doomed city. Zion was but a comely and delicate woman, incapable of defending her neighbors. Next, the prophet commissions the besiegers to come against Jerusalem; and this for universal covetousness and deceit. Such should be the eagerness of her wasters, that neither the heat of noon would delay them, nor the darkness of night, to the deep discouragement of those beleaguered. No: Jerusalem would not be instructed. The word of Jehovah is to them a reproach. Wounds were slightly healed with a “Peace, peace,” where there was none. They would neither go the good old way, nor attend to the warning of new woes. (Ver. 1-17.) “Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.” (Ver. 18, 19.) Their offerings were not acceptable. The northern foe is coming. Let Jerusalem gird herself with sackcloth. But if the Lord makes Jeremiah a fortress, the people are no better than reprobate silver, rejected of Him.

In Rev. 1 John is told to write the things he saw; the things that are—the church-state; and the things which should be after these (i.e., when this church-history closed). The whole Church, therefore, is thus to the Spirit present time—the things that are. The future was what came after—God's dealing with the world.

Chapter 105

Notes on Jeremiah 7-10

This section of our prophet starts from the temple as its groundwork, though of course branching out into all directions of the people's iniquity.

Judah at that time fell into the same fatal delusion, against which the Gentile is warned in Rom. 11 Christendom, too, has despised the apostle's admonition. Thus the solemn facts stand now in double line before us. Man asserts his self-security most loudly when he least heeds God's sovereign grace and his own responsibility to witness Him aright. The Jew flattered himself that the temple must stand by God's power, let the people be what they might. So Christendom, fallen and yet still falling, set up, corresponding to its degradation, the claims of unfailingness and infallibility, which belongs only to God.

But let us hearken: “The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these.” (Ver. 1-4.)

God must have reality in His people. Grace never was meant and never can be suffered to enfeeble the moral ways of God: indeed, it is the sole spring of power to make them precious in our eyes and to give firmness in walking according to them. And the grace that is shown to and appreciated, however feebly, by the soul, manifests fruit of righteousness in every-day life between men as surely as it sets all right Godward. No more destructive snare than that privilege can be pleaded by such as sin and continue in it. God's righteous government of His people is as certain as the mercy, which chose and blessed them: let them forget neither! “For if ye throughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye throughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever. Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord.” (Ver. 5-11.) Nearness to God, even outwardly, is the ground for a more watchful holiness, never for indifference.

But God deigns to reason with His people, notwithstanding their grossness. He points to Shiloh, where first the tabernacle of the congregation had been set up. How vain and fond the notion, that God would maintain His seat where His people insulted Him to His face! “But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord,

and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me for I will not hear thee. Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. Do they provoke me to anger? saith the Lord: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched." (Ver. 12-20.)

And what does the God and Father of the Lord Jesus now behold in Christendom? What in the East? What in the West? What in those vast tracts of Asia and Africa, where Christian assemblies once studded the countries now given over to the Mahometan apostasy? And if we come closer still, is there not as decided a setting up of false mediators in Romanism, as ever there was of false gods in Israel? If one had their "queen of heaven," has not the other theirs, worshipped with yet more passionate devotion and with far less inexcusable rejection of better light?

The rest of chapter 7 (21 et seq.) reminds the people that obedience was the claim of Jehovah, not burnt-offerings to hide their transgressions and stiff wickedness, which grew worse and worse as the prophets followed the law. Jeremiah should speak of them; but they were incorrigible idolaters. Jerusalem only dishonored the Lord and His house, and is therefore called to mourning. As the Lord had rejected the generation of His wrath, so the high places of Tophet in the valley of Hinnom's son should be superseded by the valley of slaughter till Tophet should have no more space for burial, and the carcasses of Judah should be meat for birds and beasts; and all joy should cease and the land be desolate.

Chapter 8 fills up the picture. "At that time, saith the Lord, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves: and they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth. And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the Lord of hosts." (Ver. 1-3.) Moreover, the prophet was to remonstrate with the people of Jerusalem on their perpetual and unrepentant backsliding (ver. 4-6), more heedless than familiar birds, great or small, which attend to their fit times, yet with all assumption of wisdom. (Ver. 7, 8.) But what wisdom is in those who reject the word of the Lord? Their covetousness and perfidious neglect of the true interests of Israel must meet with due retribution at His hands. He will surely consume, reversing the counsels of prudence, disappointing their hopes, and causing the whole land to tremble before their adversaries, who will bite like serpents not to be charmed. (Ver. 9-17.)

The rest of the chapter (ver. 18 to the end) and the first eight verses of chapter 9 set forth the affliction of the prophet over the deceitful malice of the people of the Lord, which forbade their knowledge of Him. Then, from ver. 9, follows their judgment under the Lord's indignant displeasure. Well might they call (ver. 17) for mourning women, and with haste; and men shall fall like the handful after the reaper, but with none in their case to gather them. (Ver. 22.) Human acquirements and resources would never do for man to glory in, but in understanding and knowing Jehovah righteous in all His ways here below, and delighting in goodness. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised; Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart.” (Ver. 25, 26.) If grace can be indiscriminate, judgment sometimes takes this shape also. And of this Jeremiah treats.

Chapter x. closes the section with a solemn warning to Israel against the superstitious fear and idolatry of heathen ways, which are exposed in the ridicule of their falsehood. “They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: The Lord of hosts is his name.” (Ver. 15, 16.) Verses 17, 18 speak of speedy and condign judgment. And the prophet (ver. 19-26) both resumes his outpouring of grief, pleads for correction only in judgment lest all should come to naught, and prays for His fury on the heathen that know Him not, the devourers of Jacob and desolaters of His habitation.

Chapter 106

Notes on Jeremiah 11-13

This section opens with the call of Jehovah to hear the words of the covenant between Him and His people. It is the covenant of law, not the ways of grace. By this Israel had bound themselves; but they forgot, transgressed, and despised it, not more to His dishonor than to their own hurt. Little did they feel its solemnity when they undertook to obey it; not at all did they take into account their own self-will and rebelliousness. The sad and sure result was their ruin; and such must God's law invariably prove to the sinner. It never was given as a source of life, strength, or holiness; grace, the very reverse of law, alone can be such; and this, not from defect in the law (for it is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good), but from the inherent weakness and invariable evil of fallen man judged by a divine standard. The fatal error of Israel was shown at the beginning by their proffer to take their stand and hope of blessing, not on the promises made to the fathers, but on the accomplishment of the law to be rendered by themselves; it was ignoring God's grace and their sin; it was presumptuous confidence in their own powers and guilty obliviousness of Him who alone could make reconciliation for iniquity and bring in everlasting righteousness. What, in such a question, is man to be accounted of? Let him at least confess his sinfulness to God and look to another—a Deliverer outside himself. This was precisely what Israel did not, and thence followed their mournful history of pride and falling through sin from first to last. To turn from promise to law, to accept and pledge conditions of obedience must be destructive to sinful men. This was just Israel's case, and God brings it before them.

“The word that came to Jeremiah from Jehovah saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant, which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God: that I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is this day. Then answered I, and said, So be it, O Lord.” (Ver. 1-5.)

But self-will soon goes into rebellion, and this again into idolatry. “Then Jehovah said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them. For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice. Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do; but they did them not. And the Lord said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.” (Ver. 6-10.)

Impossible that Jehovah should be a consenting party to His people's sin and misery, any more than to His own dishonor. Judgment, therefore, should not slumber. “Therefore thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they 'shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them. Then shall the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense: but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble. For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal. Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble. What hath my beloved to do in mine house, seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many, and the holy flesh is passed from thee? when thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest. The Lord called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken. For the Lord of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal.” (Ver. 11-17.)

In the latter part of the chapter (ver. 18-23) the prophet states how the Lord had made know n all to him; for he was as unconscious of their murderous devices against himself as the beast devoted to slaughter. So he calls for righteous vengeance on the guilty people, specially and full soon on the men of Anathoth, to whom Jeremiah's nearness had furnished the opportunity of proving their excessive iniquity.

This is pursued in the first four verses of chapter xii., where the prophet complains to Jehovah of the prosperity of the wicked in the land—so much the more grievous a stumbling-block because He was as near in their mouth as far from their reins.

This is answered in verses 5-13, where Jehovah prepares the tried spirit of His servant for greater ills, and declares He has forsaken His house and heritage, giving the love of His soul (as He calls His people Israel) into the enemies' hands. Desolation therefore was coming, and the sword of Jehovah.

Nevertheless even here Jehovah warns all His evil neighbors who sought to profit by the disasters of the Jews. “Behold, I will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the house of Judah from among them. And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land. And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The Lord liveth, as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people. But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the Lord.” (Ver. 14-17.)

'The section ends with a symbolic action to which the prophet was called in chapter 13, its application and touching appeal to Jerusalem founded on it. The girdle worn and kept safely, then utterly marred, set forth what Jehovah had been and what He would be to Judah. (Verses 1-11.) Did the people taunt the prophet as telling them what they knew? Let them learn what they did not believe, their own destruction now imminent, kings, priests, prophets, all: the God of mercy should not have mercy, but destroy them unsparingly. “Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord

hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive. Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, even the crown of your glory. The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open them: Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive. Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north: where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock? What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? for thou hast taught them to be captains, and as chief over thee: shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail." (Ver. 15-21.) Did Jerusalem say in her heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? Alas! the answer was already prepared: "For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered and thy heels made bare." (Ver. 22.) Their evil was as hopelessly ingrained as the black of a negro or the spots of a leopard. Jehovah should not only scatter His people, but put them to extreme shame. (Ver. 24-27.) So it must be till all has been fulfilled. There remains greater horrors: only there is one that yet hinders the last excess of lawlessness in the rising of the lawless one against Jehovah and His Anointed. But this belongs to another witness than Jeremiah: so I say no more here.

Chapter 107

Notes on Jeremiah 14-15

This section opens with a graphic picture of the pressure of death on the Jews and Jerusalem, which filled the land with mourning and leveled the great and small, man and beast, in common privation and suffering. (Ver. 1-6.) This draws out the prophet in touching intercession. “O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee. O the hope of Israel, the savior thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? Why shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.” (Ver. 7-9.)

But was it possible for Jehovah, whatever His mercy, to accept the degradation of His name at the hands of His own favored people? “Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the Lord doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins.” (Ver. 10.) How solemn when Jehovah says to His servant “Pray not for this people for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry: and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.” (Ver. 11, 12.) This to one who loved the people of God was in every way a trial: what was it to Him who loves as only God can love? Yet it remains true, and there are times when the principle applies, and faith is bound to find it out and act on it, whatever the reproach of uncharitableness. Such a reproach, that costs nothing, gratifies the flesh, and buys the favor of those with whom God has a controversy. But the favor of the guilty people is dearly bought, at the expense of His approval and glory.

Nevertheless, Jeremiah spreads before the Lord that which misled the people most and was the chief source of difficulty to himself. “Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place. Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of naught, and the deceit of their heart. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed. And the people to whom, they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters for I will pour their wickedness upon them.” The false prophets must be the first to fall by the very ill from which they promised the people exemption, and the people must learn the folly of heeding man's promises by their own righteous ruin.

The rest of the chapter (ver. 17-22) is an outpouring of sorrow; for indeed the desolation was without and within, and both the prophet and the priest helped it on for the sake of selfish advantage, fattening on the corruption of God's people. What could Jeremiah do but bewail? This was not forbidden. It was an awful thing for a godly Jew to think of—the rupture of Israel's bond

with Jehovah, the loss of their distinctive place as His people on earth. “Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul loathed Zion? why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? we looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble! We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee. Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us. Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art thou not he, O Lord our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these things.” (Ver. 19-22.)

In the beginning of chapter 15 the Lord is still more peremptory. At the most critical points in the past Moses and Samuel had cried to Jehovah, and not in vain. The people had cast off Jehovah as their God and as their king; yet had he hearkened to His servants, and staid the hand uplifted as it was in judgment. But now, said Jehovah to Jeremiah, “Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth. And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord, Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy. And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.

For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan thee? or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest? Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting. And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave them of children, 1 will destroy my people, since they return not from their ways. Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas: I have brought upon them against the mother of the young men a spoiler at noonday: I have caused him to fall upon it suddenly, and terrors upon the city. She that hath borne seven languisheth: she hath given up the ghost; her sun is gone down while it was yet day: she hath been ashamed and confounded: and the residue of them will I deliver to the sword before their enemies, saith the Lord.” (Ver. 1-9.)

Most acutely does the prophet feel the anguish of such desolation from Jehovah's hand (ver. 10), not famine merely in the land, but a sweeping captivity out of it. The point of faith in such circumstances is ever the spirit of faith that accepts the strokes as righteously measured out by His hand, and not as the result either of mistake on the part of the people or of skill and strength in their enemies. God ruled in it all, and this in view of His people's shameless departure from Himself.

Nevertheless there is no time of retribution, chastening, and sorrow when the same faith which sees God in the circumstances is not given to see Him above them. “The Lord said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant; verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil and in the time of affliction. Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel? Thy substance and thy treasures will I give to the spoil without price, and that for all thy sins, even in all thy borders. And I will make thee to pass with thine enemies into a land which thou knowest not: for a fire is kindled in

mine anger, which shall burn upon you.” (Ver. 11-14.)

Here the prophet (ver. 15) looks for the judgment of his persecutors, who were found, alas! far more among the Jews than outside. He recounts the sweetness to his spirit of that divine word which brought him into pain perpetual in the sense of the people's sin, and of the judgments impending on them. (Ver. 16-18.) Isolated and crushed he groans to Jehovah, who gives him the needed comfort: “If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord. And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.” (Ver. 19-21.) To return from one's own thoughts and feelings to Him is strength; and to have a heart for what is precious sifted and severed from the vile, fits one to be His mouthpiece. (Compare 2 Tim. 2:20-22.) True grace makes one immovable and victorious, let the odds be what they may.

Chapter 108

Notes on Jeremiah 16-17

The prophet has, in this section, a new picture of the excessive evil of the people and of the impending judgments and woes.

“The word of the Lord came also unto me, saying, Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place. For thus saith the Lord concerning the sons and concerning the daughters that are born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land: they shall die of grievous deaths; they, shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth: and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.” (Ver. 1-4.) No relationship was to be contracted in the land, no longer were sons or daughters to be desired as a heritage from Jehovah. Children and parents alike were devoted to a sorrowful end, without lamentation or even burial, consumed by sword and famine, left as dung on the ground, or meat for birds and beasts of prey. And this was Jehovah's decree about His people!

This is followed up in verses 5-7, where every sign of sympathy in their bereavement is forbidden. “For thus saith the Lord, Enter not into the house of mourning, neither go to lament nor bemoan them: for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the Lord, even lovingkindness and mercies. Both the great and the small shall die in this land: they shall not be buried, neither shall men lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them: neither shall men tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead; neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother.” I would here remark that the marginal rendering gives the best sense in the beginning of the last verse; for there is no connection between men tearing themselves for those in mourning and comforting them for the dead; whereas to break bread as a sign is natural, especially as followed up by giving the cup of consolation. This, which was customary on occasions of mourning, was a sort of transition between the paschal feast and the Lord's Supper, wherein the Lord would have us remember Him and thus show forth His death.

Thus, as every token of loving sympathy was now interdicted to the prophet; so was equally every form of congratulation. “Thou shalt not also go into the house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and to drink. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride.” (Ver. 8, 9.) God should cause all festive occasions to vanish away from the land of His delight on which His eyes rest continually.

Thus did He compass His people round with accumulated proofs of His displeasure to the uttermost, if peradventure they might still repent. At least the warnings, thus given and despised by the rebellious people, would instruct those who might have ears to hear in their midst. “And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt show this people all these words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us? or what is our iniquity? or what

is our sin that we have committed against the Lord our God? Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the Lord, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law; and ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me: therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not show you favor." (Ver. 10-13.)

It would be sad indeed, were this all. But it is not; sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." (Ver. 14, 15.) The bright future would eclipse the most magnificent deliverance of the past, and with so much the more solidity as being the fruit of a faithful God's mercy, after all the experience of their evil ways. Nor should it be like the single act in the days of Moses. "Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every bill, and out of the holes of the rocks. For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes." (Ver. 16, 17.)

But grace in their case, as in ours, in no way sets aside the governmental dealings of God; and in theirs especially, as having a covenant character under law, before they are placed under Messiah and the new covenant. "And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things." (Ver. 18.) This drew before the prophet the picture of Israel's idolatries, and extorts from him the apostrophe, with the Lord's answer, which closes the chapter. "O Lord, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods? Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is The Lord." (Ver. 19-21.) What a rebuke to the Jews that the most distant Gentiles should yet come and be ashamed of their false gods, which nevertheless entangled the sons of Israel so often and long.

It is by judgments that Jehovah's name shall at length be known. But so much the more distressing was the present state of Judah. As the prophet says, "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars: whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills." (Chap. xvii. 1, 2.) Hence, then, judgment was inevitable; for the Lord shall judge His people. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for your iniquities." (Amos 3) Bethel and Gilgal could be no cover for the transgressions of the chosen people, but rather made them more glaring and excuseless. Hence the word, "O my mountain in the field, I will give thy substance and all thy treasures to the spoil, and thy high places for sin, throughout all thy borders. And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not; for ye have

kindled a fire in mine anger, which shall burn forever. (Ver. 3, 4.)

Alas! the Jews were but men like the nations, but more guilty; for they departed from Him whom the other, knew not. Therefore “thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. 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 not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.” (Ver. 5-8.)

How then can it be that a people should be more indifferent to their God, the true God that loved them, than the most depraved to their idols? “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.” (Ver. 9-11.) The ill-gotten flies away. Continuance is only in God even for what He gives. And in Israel's case there was the less palliation; for God had done great things for them. “A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary. O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters. Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.” (Ver. 12-14.)

This accounts for all that follows: on the one hand, the mockers in Jerusalem, who dared the fulfillment of Jehovah's word; on the other hand, the prophet's confident appeal to Him who knew all, that his desire was far from the woeful day for the people. In Him only was his hope, and that He should be a terror to adversaries, not to him who spoke what was right before Himself. (Ver. 15-18.)

Nevertheless, as in Nineveh, so in Jerusalem, God delights in goodness and mercy; and a public message goes forth to prince and people at the gates of the city, that if they hearkened to the Lord and hallowed His sabbath, all would be well for them in joy, and prosperity, and thankful praise before the Lord. But if not, He would kindle a fire to devour their palaces which should not be quenched. How soon and truly it came to pass!

Notes on Jeremiah 18-20

The prophet is now told to betake himself to the potter's house, where he was to hear Jehovah's words. There he beholds a vessel of clay marred in the potter's hands, and another vessel made as he would. (Ver. 1-4.) “Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.” (Ver. 5-10.) The will of man is only evil. The sole hope is in God Himself. But Israel, as Christendom now, feels neither, even where both are in words confessed; for there is a real turning from evil where grace works, and man is quick to claim the credit of it. On the other hand, man is prone to depart from the living God, who would deny Himself if He made light of disobedience, and treated evil in His sight as if it were good.

Another awful effect of perseverance in evil is despair. Man never trusts God really; and a divine call or warning provokes this form of his will. Were it broken, he would at least cry to God and cast himself on what God is, who cannot deny that He is love. His goodness leads to repentance, man's will to desperation. “Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good. And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart. Therefore, thus saith the Lord; Ask ye now among the heathen, who hath heard such things: the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing. Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken? Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up; to make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head. I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.” (Ver. 11-17.)

But this draws out hatred of the prophet, and determination to defend things as they are; while the tried witness of the Lord can only plead against Israel, however much he had sought before Him to speak good for them and to deprecate His wrath. “Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words. Give heed to me, O Lord, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me. Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul. Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them. Therefore

deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their blood by the force of the sword; and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and be widows; and let their men be put to death; let their young men be slain by the sword in battle. Let a cry be heard from their houses, when thou shalt bring a troop suddenly upon them: for they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet. Yet, Lord, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay me: forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight, but let them be overthrown before thee; deal thus with them in the time of thine anger." (Ver. 18 -.23.)

In chapter six. Jehovah summons the prophet to take a potter's earthen bottle before the ancients of the people and of the priests and in the valley of Hinnom to proclaim His new message. "Hear ye the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; they have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind: therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter. And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth. And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof. And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them." (Ver. 3-9.)

Then (ver. 10) he was to break the bottle with the words, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again; and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury. Thus will I do unto this place, saith the Lord, and to the inhabitants thereof, and even make this city as Tophet: and the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods." (Ver. 11-13.) Nor was this all: the prophet on his return from Tophet stood in the court of Jehovah's house, and said to all the people, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words." (Ver. 15.)

This (chap. 20) draws out the persecution of Pashur the son of Immer the priest, chief governor in the house of Jehovah, who smote Jeremiah and put his feet in the stocks. But the prophet on the morrow gave his adversary, from Jehovah, the name of Magor-missabib (i.e., fear round about), with a still more precise menace of speedy judgment on all Judah, and the strength of the city, and the treasures of the kings, which should go to Babylon. (Ver. 1-5.) "And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies."

The rest of the section is of deep interest, where the prophet bemoans his sad testimony and skews how truly the treasure was in an earthen vessel, that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of men. After all his inward conflicts, the result is his own fresh confidence in Jehovah. “But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten. But, O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause. Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord; for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.” Even then however the chapter (ver. 14-18) closes with cursing the day of his birth and the messenger who congratulated his father on such a child, the prophet of woe for Israel, Certainly prophecy came not at any time by the will of man, but holy men spake as borne along by the Holy Ghost.

Notes on Jeremiah 21-24

Zedekiah's message to the prophet in the last struggle with the king of Babylon, gave occasion to the section before us. "Inquire, I pray thee, of the Lord for us; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us; if so be that the Lord will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, that he may go up from us." (Ver. 2.)

The answer of the Lord was peremptory in the extreme. How could it be otherwise to a king who thus hypocritically honored Jehovah with his lips when his heart was far from Him? All was hopeless for the king of Judah, who skewed less value for the oath he had taken than the Gentile who had imposed it on him. "Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah: Thus saith the Lord God of Israel; Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city. And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath. And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence. And afterward, saith the Lord, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy." (Ver. 4-7.)

Yet even then God has a word for the people (ver. 8-10), and sets before them the way of life, no less than that of death. "He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey. For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the Lord: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire." (Ver. 9, 10.) Nor is the house of the king forgotten. "Hear ye the word of the Lord; O house of David, thus saith the Lord; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings. Behold, I am against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain, saith the Lord; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations? But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the Lord: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it." (Ver. 11-14.)

But this call to awake to righteousness the Lord follows up in chapter 22. by sending the prophet down to the king's house with a further appeal. "Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates: Thus saith the Lord: Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place. For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there

enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people. But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the Lord, that this house shall become a desolation. For thus saith the Lord unto the king's house of Judah; Thou art Gilead unto me, and the head of Lebanon: yet surely I will make thee a wilderness, and cities which are not inhabited. And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire. And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every one to his neighbor, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this great city? Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them." (Ver. 2-9.)

Nor is this all. The various kings of Judah who had reigned during the crisis of the capital come before us successively. Never had a louder wail been heard in the land than when all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. "And Jeremiah [we are told expressly in 2 Chron. 35] lamented for Josiah; and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel; and behold, they are written in the lamentations." But here, long after, the same Jeremiah says of Josiah's son, "Weep ye not for the dead [i.e., Josiah], neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country. For thus saith the Lord touching Shallum the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place, He shall not return thither any more: but shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more." (Ver. 10-12.) Josiah might be mourned justly by a people that lost so godly a king cut off prematurely; but far more deplorable in itself was the lot of his son deposed and carried away into Egypt by Pharaoh-Necho.

Was this all? Far from it. The king of Egypt set up another son of Josiah, changed his name from Eliakim to Jehoiakim; but Nebuchadnezzar bound the guilty monarch in chains, and carried him to Babylon. And his dirge follows: "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; that saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the Lord. But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem." (Ver. 13-19.) Who of the kings had lived with less conscience? Who had died with more shame? No lamentation for him but an ass's burial (i.e., base exposure) beyond the gates of Jerusalem. For the innocent blood he shed, the Lord would not pardon. See Jer. 36:30.

But had not Jehoiakim a son? Wretched was he, Jehoiachin, who succeeded to his father's guilt and misery. How could he be said to sit upon the throne of David? He reigned in Jerusalem but three months before the lion came up from his thicket and the destroyer of the Gentiles was on his way, the avenger under divine Providence of one who did evil in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that his father had done. "Go up to Lebanon and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry

from the passages: for all thy lovers are destroyed. I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice. The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity: surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness. O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars, how gracious shalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail! As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence; and I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die. But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return. Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear ye the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." (Ver. 20-30.)

Thus the roll is complete: for he with whom the chapter opens was the last king of Judah, Zedekiab, before the capital finally sunk, and the sanctuary was burnt, and the king of the Chaldees had all given into his hand. The answer to his message brings before us the sad group, miserable successors of the righteous king taken away from the evil now come.

Hence in chapter 23 we have their general and solemn judgment, but not without the vision of sovereign mercy when the Son of David shall arise. How refreshing to read such words in the midst of the moral horrors we have had before us! "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people, Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land." (Ver. 1-8.)

This prophecy has never been fulfilled. When He came, who is to fulfill its every letter as well as its spirit to the full, He did not reign nor prosper, but was cast out from the earth, and exalted in heaven. Thus greater things were accomplished than a Davidical kingdom or a restoration of the dispersed tribes of Israel. For the very rejection of the Messiah by the Jews gave occasion to the mighty work of redemption by the blood of the cross; and heavenly counsels, previously unrevealed, are now brought out by the holy apostles and prophets, while the Jews are more than

ever scattered, and Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. But those times being ended, and the Church of the heavenly places having been meanwhile called and completed in glory, the Lord will turn the heart of His ancient people, at least of a remnant, to Himself, and will return and reign gloriously, executing judgment and justice in the earth. The greatness of this future deliverance will altogether eclipse the day when they first left Egypt and soon saw their enemies dead upon the sea-shore. It is ridiculous to pretend that any such gathering of the tribes has yet been wrought. It is therefore future.

But if Jeremiah had thus a woe for the pastors with the assurance of a true Pastor that was coming, even Jehovah-Tsidkenu as He shall be called, he was compelled meanwhile to denounce the prophets and priests. (Ver. 9-40.) There was absurdity in the idolatrous prophets of Samaria; there was filthiness in the prophets of Jerusalem, whence hypocrisy was gone forth into all the land. Jehovah of hosts therefore commanded His people not to hearken to the prophets who thus made them vain, speaking a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. Peace, and no evil, cried they; when behold a whirlwind of Jehovah is gone forth in fury, to fall grievously on the head of the wicked. They were wholly unauthorized: had they caused His people to bear His words, they should have turned them from their evil way. Jehovah, who filled heaven and earth, was not unheeding but marked those who prophesied lies in His name. If they had His word, let them speak it faithfully. “Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbor. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.” (Ver. 29-32.)

That Jehovah would forsake them was the due burden now, and the burden of Jehovah was not to be mentioned more; for every man's word should be his burden. He would cast out prophet, priest, and people from His presence, and bring on them an everlasting reproach, and a perpetual shame which should not be forgotten.

Chapter 24 appears to conclude this collection of predictions given at different times, but brought together here because of their moral unity as clustering round the last kings of Judah in view of the fall of Jerusalem. The object was to set forth clearly, under the image of two baskets of figs, the wholly opposite fates that awaited those Jews who with Jeconiah were carried off to Babylon, and those who with Zedekiah remained in the land or dwelt in Egypt. “Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart. And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the Lord, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt. And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. And I will send the sword, the famine,

and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers." (Ver. 5-10.) It is painful but of faith to bow to God's solemn judgment of our sin; for He cannot be unfaithful to Himself, and loves to exalt those who abase themselves in His sight. It was unbelief to cleave to the temple and the land when God was judging all, just because His name set there had been made an excuse for the grossest and most rebellious iniquity.

Notes on Jeremiah 25

This chapter has a central relation to what goes before and after, not more in fact than in force. We have seen the evils of the people of God, especially of Judah, laid bare. They had refused all the patient perseverance of God's increasingly solemn warnings, as well as His gracious encouragements; and in consequence of their deliberate and persistent idolatry, their condign punishment at the hand of the king of Babylon is announced. After their seventy years' captivity, their chastiser must be visited of Jehovah, and this with no such measure assigned as to Judah. Had the instrument of divine judgment lifted up itself proudly? It must he surely judged itself without mercy. “The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon: the which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened. And the Lord hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear. They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord hath given unto you and to your fathers forever and ever: and go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt. Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the Lord; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations. For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands.” (Ver. 1-14.)

Then the prophet is bid to administer the cup of vengeance to the guilty nations; but behold, among these, and as the first of them, stand Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, and their kings and princes! “For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be

moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. Then took I the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord had sent me: to wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; as it is this day; Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people; and all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Uzzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod, Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon, and all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which are beyond the sea, Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all that are in the utmost corners, and all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert, and all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes, and all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you. And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Ye shall certainly drink. For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts." (Ver. 15-29.)

It is thus an universal principle that God in judgment begins with that which bears His name—His people, His city, His house. And if He begins there, where can He stop? Impossible to pass by His haughty enemies. Thus a judgment is involved, first, of the nations which had most to do with His people, but not ceasing till He takes in all the kings, kingdoms, and inhabitants of the earth. To restrain this to that which was accomplished of old is to make the prophetic word of private interpretation, and to force into a narrow, temporary compass what is plainly and expressly of unlimited extent.

The chapter clearly looks on from the past dealings of God with Jerusalem, its neighbors, and its Chaldean foes, to the universal judgment of the habitable earth at the end of the age.

"Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground. Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel. And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape. A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock, shall be heard: for the Lord hath spoiled their pasture. And the peaceable habitations are cut down because of the fierce anger of the Lord. He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion: for their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the oppressor, and because of his

fierce anger." (Ver. 30-38.)

Notes on Jeremiah 26

The second half of this book consists of special circumstances. Here it is a question of the prophet's call to fidelity in his office.

“Thus saith the Lord; Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word: if so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings. And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, to hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened; then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.” (Ver. 2 - 6.) It is unworthy of a servant to pare down the message of the Master. Only let him take care that he add not to His words nor to the tone in which they should be conveyed: for much depends on this, especially in intercourse with others. Hence the apostle wished to be enabled to change his voice, which of course is precluded by written communication.

How unwearied too is the patience of the Lord, who guarantees His own repentance of the evil He could not but threaten, if they but hearkened and turned from their evil doings. But if they persisted in their rejection of His prophets whom He had sent (as He says, “rising up early and sending them"), let them prepare for the worst. No mercy should turn aside His profanation of His sanctuary which their sins had already profaned. The temple He should make as Shiloh, and the city a curse before all nations. It is an awful state of infatuation when men presume on God's favor to His people, spite of their indifference to His will and glory, and predicate the necessary faithfulness of God at the expense of His character and to let off those whom Satan has perverted into His worst enemies under the cover of His name, and law, and land.

In this state a bad conscience makes men implacable; and as they have no faith in God's threatenings any more than in His promises, so the one desire is to extinguish the testimony which galls them. “So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord. Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die. Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord.” (Ver. 7-9.)

But when the enemy comes in thus, the Spirit of the Lord, if He does not lift up a standard, knows how to sustain a witness till the work is complete. As usual, it was the religious element which was most wounded by the word of God and most hostile to His servant. The priests and the prophets, with all the people easily excited and misled, determined on his death, and this in Jehovah's house. “When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house

unto the house of the Lord, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the Lord's house. Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears." (Ver. 10, 11.)

But the princes were not so easily moved as the people, who, under those more used to calm and dispassionate deliberation, renounced for the moment their former counsels. "Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears. Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets: This man is not worthy to die; he hath spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God." (Ver. 12-16.)

The prophet pleads His commission from Jehovah, repeats the sum of His words without disguise, calls on them to repent of their sins that the Lord might repent of His judgments, but leaves himself in their hand, with a solemn warning to beware of shedding innocent blood. His murder would certainly neither disprove his mission from the Lord, nor turn aside the divine vengeance from themselves nor Jerusalem. The conscience of those addressed answered to His appeal.

"Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying, Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest. Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls." (Ver. 17-19.)

A counter case, however, is added. If holy boldness was protected, prudence would be a feeble, short-lived, defense, even if the timid prophet took refuge in a foreign land. "And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the Lord, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath-Jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah: and when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt; and Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, namely, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and certain men with him into Egypt. And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him to Jehoiakim the king; who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people." (Ver. 20-23.) Thus Micah and Urijah were each instructive, though from a different point; and "the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death." Poor are the people that are in such a case; as hapless as inconstant are they, whose will leads them, and not the Lord.

Chapter 113

Notes on Jeremiah 27-28

It is well known that an error has crept into the text of the prefatory verse. The reader has only to compare verses 3 and 12, with 19, 20, to make this clear and certain. For “Jehoiakim” in verse 1 read Zedekiah.

The occasion of this word from Jehovah to Jeremiah was an effort at a coalition of the king of Judah with the kings that surrounded the land to throw off the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar. Vain thought! God had for an appointed term given him a dominion unlimited in title: if limited in fact, it was only that he did not push with his arms yet farther. Rebellious thought! for the God who gave the king of Babylon this large place of authority was avowedly chastising His own people whose evil refused all remedy. Now when God is judging sin, the only suited feeling of man is repentance in dust and ashes with submission of heart to His ways. Therefore was the prophet to say “Thus saith the Lord to me; Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck, and send them to the king of Edom and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah; and command them to say unto their masters, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say unto your masters; I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon-, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.” (Ver. 2-8.)

The mourning prophet was called to a course, unspeakably bold and presumptuous in the eye of his countrymen—how much more in the eyes of the ambassadors and the foreign powers! But God does not abate His sovereign will, nor hide the claims of His glory, because His people degrade themselves and put His name to open shame. And what a rebuke, especially to Judah and the guilty son of David, to hear “the God of Israel” proclaim Nebuchadnezzar as “His servant,” not only to the Jew but to their Gentile neighbors! The divine grant too was as minute as it was extensive: “the beasts of the field” did Jehovah give to serve him, as well as “all these lands.” But Babylon's supremacy was measured. It was no purpose of mercy; it was but a sovereign disposition in providence, and as the accomplishment of the needed chastisement of Judah and the nations. This over, many nations and great kings should serve themselves of the Babylonian king after the third generation, as surely as all nations should serve him meanwhile. But serve they must till then on pain of God's punishment with His sore plagues.

Observe that the conduct of faith at such a time exposed the prophet (and those who needed the word of the Lord) to the charge both of indifference to their country's honor and liberty, and of proud insubjection to the powers that ruled over Palestine and the kingdoms round about. This is not the least of the trials of a sensitive spirit. Observe, further, that the path of faith is inseparable from the actual message of God that applied to the then condition of His people. It was worse than useless to imitate what was of God for the days of Moses, of Joshua, of David, or even of Hezekiah. Faith is ever taught of God, and understands His present testimony and dealings. Always a true principle, this is verified now pre-eminently in the Christian. He has the mind of Christ, and is responsible to gather by the Holy Spirit from the perfect revelation of God what is for our guidance as each conjuncture arises. There is no need for which God has not provided in His word; but the Spirit alone can apply it aright, acting in us to the glory of the Lord Jesus. Appearances may be against the faithful as much now as in the days of Jeremiah. Our business is to do God's will and to diffuse the witness of His truth, spite of every adversary.

“Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish. But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord; and they shall till it, and dwell therein.” (Ver. 9-11.) To be stiff-necked and refuse the word of divine warning is the sure road to the fulfillment of His word in our own misery and destruction. To obey is better than sacrifice in the worst of times as much as in the best. But the prophets of men prophesy what suits their masters' wishes and their own immediate interests, and only hasten the evil against which they promise a security as hollow as it is loud.

But the prophet perseveres and warns first Zedekiah the king, then the priests and all the people. “I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live. Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the Lord hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? Therefore hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you. For I have not sent them, saith the Lord, yet they prophesy a lie in my name; that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you. Also I spake to the priests and to all this people, saying, Thus saith the Lord; Hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy into you, saying, Behold, the vessels of the Lord's house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you. Hearken not unto them; serve the king of Babylon, and live: wherefore should this city be laid waste? But if they be prophets, and if the word of the Lord be with them, let them now make intercession to the Lord of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the Lord, and in the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon. For thus saith the Lord of hosts concerning the pillars, and concerning the sea, and concerning the bases, and concerning the residue of the vessels that remain in this city, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem; yea, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain in the house of the Lord, and in the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem; they

shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be until the day that I visit them, saith the Lord; then will I bring them up, and restore them to this place." (Ver. 12-22.) In presence of sin, the flesh holds out fair hopes and immediate pleasure; but the Spirit always insists on that subjection to God's sentence on sin, which cannot but be repulsive to nature but ensures His blessing both now and evermore. Pride goes before a fall; and a refractory spirit paves the way for yet deeper humiliation.

But the enemy grows bolder (chap. 28.); and Hananiah dares to trifle with the name of Jehovah in His own house. "And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, and in the fifth month, that Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, which was of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the Lord's house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon: and I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the Lord: for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. Then the prophet Jeremiah said unto the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of the Lord, even the prophet Jeremiah said, Amen: the Lord do so: the Lord perform thy words which thou hast prophesied, to bring again the vessels of the Lord's house, and all that is carried away captive, from Babylon into this place. Nevertheless hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people; the prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence. The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him. Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it. And Hananiah spake in the presence of all the people, saying, Thus saith the Lord; Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way." (Ver. 1-11.)

Evil seemed now to have a full and easy victory over good. But God did not await even the brief space to which Hananiah had committed himself under the instigation of Satan. "Then the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah the prophet, after that Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Go and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord; Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also. Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah; The Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord. So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month." (Ver. 12-17.) God is not mocked. His word abides forever. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way. But the expectation of the wicked shall perish. Destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

Notes on Jeremiah 29

In this chapter the prophet instructs the captives in Babylon as to their stay in the strange land, the right feeling to be cultivated toward its sovereign, and the falsity of the hopes their prophets were giving out. The Lord in His due time would prove His goodness to His people, whether preparatorily soon, or finally in a day not yet arrived. The objects of their trust, whether prophetic or royal, should fall under His judgments, even in some cases most ignominiously and unsparingly by the hand of the ruler of Babylon; in others by a total failure of seed to inherit the blessing when it comes from the hand of Jehovah.

“Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon; (after that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem;) by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon) saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon: build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.” (Ver. 1-7.)

Thus the prophet forwards his letter to the captives by the messengers whom Zedekiah sent to Nebuchadnezzar. It was no accidental slip of Jeconiah and the people; it was no power of the king of Babylon which accounted for the degradation of the Jews. Jehovah of hosts had caused them to be carried away to the city of the conqueror; and He it was that now spoke to them by Jeremiah. How gracious thus to notice them after all their guilt and to link His name with theirs in their fallen estate! It was worse than vain to hope for an immediate return to Palestine: no conspiracies, no resolutions would avail. It was Jehovah's word that they should settle down in the land of their captivity, building and planting, marrying and giving in marriage, and thus increase rather than diminish, seeking withal the peace of the city where they sojourned, and this heartily as from the Lord, and not as pleasing men. In its peace should be their peace. Assuredly the ways of the Lord are wise and good, wholesome and edifying. Oh that His people had hearkened to Him, and Israel had walked in His ways! But as of old Israel would none of Him, so now were the captive Jews in danger of being a prey to the deceivers who fattened on the folly and sin they helped on.

Hence the prophet was directed to add a special warning against false spiritual pretensions. “For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. For

they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord. For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive." (Ver. 8-14.) The stay of seventy years in Babylon was measured of Jehovah. It was long enough to accomplish His chastening; it was short enough to prove His tender mercy, and leave room for a greater display of Himself, to be followed, alas! by a more dismal and lasting punishment of their guiltier rejection of their own Messiah.

Had they boasted of those the Lord had raised up in Babylon to prophesy? Alas! the true prophet was the least heeded; for he was no counselor of rebellion, neither did he despise the word of Jehovah that came by Jeremiah, but gave himself up to prayer and confession as the time of deliverance drew near. But as to those who trusted the false prophets, "Because ye have said, The Lord hath raised us up prophets in Babylon; know that thus saith the Lord of the king that sitteth upon the throne of David, and of all the people that dwelleth in this city, and of your brethren that are not gone forth with you into captivity: thus saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them: because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the Lord, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the Lord." (Ver. 15-19.)

But this is not enough. Public examples were needful in special instances to admonish and impress the obdurate people, as credulous of man as they were unbelieving toward God. "Hear ye therefore the word of the Lord, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon: thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiab, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name; Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall slay them before your eyes; and of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saving, The Lord make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire; because they have committed villainy in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord." (Ver. 20-23.) And as Shemaiah had sent letters, as from Jehovah, from Babylon to Jerusalem, stirring up the priests especially against Jeremiah, God was no heedless hearer of his audacious profanity. "Thus shalt thou also speak to Shemaiah the Nehelamite, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, Because thou hast sent letters in thy name unto all the people that are at Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying, The Lord hath made thee priest in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the Lord, for every man that is mad, and maketh

himself a prophet, that thou shouldest put him in prison, and in the stocks. Now therefore why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you? For therefore he sent unto us in Babylon, saying, This captivity is long: build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet. Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying, Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the Lord concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite; Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie: therefore thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed: he shall not have a man to dwell among this people; neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the Lord; because he hath taught rebellion against the Lord." (Ver. 24-32.) Truly God is not mocked. The curse causeless shall not come; but those who, miserable themselves, are given up to a spirit of hostility and detraction of God's servants abiding in the truth, shall of the flesh reap the corruption they sow.

Notes on Jeremiah 30-31

The next communication from Jehovah pledges that He will bring back His people to the land He gave their fathers. (Ver 1-3.) Has this been accomplished? No more than an earnest of it. It is His work and shall not fail when fulfilled in power. One of the peculiarities of it is that it is the day of their greatest trouble, yet it is immediately their complete and, as we shall see, final deliverance. The return from Babylon in no way meets such a description; for their return from that captivity was preceded by the day of the Lord on the proud city of the Chaldeans, and in no sense the time of Jacob's trouble. Again, the siege of Titus, however severe a time of trouble to the Jew, cannot possibly be regarded as the time; for Jacob was led captive and scattered more than ever, instead of being then delivered. But these are the only notable epochs that can be pretended since. It remains then that the hour of unparalleled trouble preceding their great deliverance is future and will surely be fulfilled. “And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.” (Ver. 4-9.) Who will deny that the yoke is not broken, that bonds still restrain, that strangers yet serve themselves of Israel? Who will affirm that they are serving Jehovah their God, and David their king? Can this be any other than their true Beloved, their Messiah, the promised Son of that line? He is come no doubt, but as yet refused by them; but the time hastens when Him too they shall serve. It follows however their salvation out of their last time of trouble.

“Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished. For thus saith the Lord, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines. All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased. Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee. Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion whom no man seeketh after.” (Ver. 10-17.) Here Jehovah

renews His assurance not of saving Israel only, but of their return and rest from the land of their captivity. This is not the gospel. Christianity presents other and higher hopes—grace gathering to Christ on high; and not deliverance by the execution of divine judgments on their Gentile adversaries as here.

From verse 18 there is a third repetition of Jehovah's mercy to His ancient people. “Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed. thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them. And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord. And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it.” (Ver. 18-24.) Here their national restoration is yet more minutely portrayed, and with increasing disproof's of any adequate application to the past or present. From the return out of Babylon till the Romans sacked Jerusalem there was no more than “a little reviving in their bondage.” They were but servants in their own land under the great empires, with which is contrasted the promise that “their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them. But there is a far transcendent change. Lo-ammi is no longer to be inscribed on Israel; but “ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.” A divine all-searching judgment of men most clearly and expressly characterizes this intervention of Jehovah: “In the latter days ye shall consider it.” Alas! the Jews have not considered it yet.

Another material distinction is already set out in the beginning of chapter 31. It is no return of Judah, but of the twelve tribes: how different from the scanty remnant of the Jews with a few stragglers of other tribes under Ezra and Nehemiah! Here all the families of Israel are in question. “At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. Thus saith the Lord, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry. Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things. For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God. For thus saith the Lord; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my

firstborn.” (Ver. 1-9.) Who can pretend that this has been made good either in the Jews or in the gospel, much as the gospel has transcended it?

I know the nations are summoned to hear, but it is not of their own salvation but Israel's blessing. “Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord.” (Ver. 10-14).

It is vain to cite Matt. 2, as if it proved the complete accomplishment of verse 15: especially as the formula points out no more than a correspondence in spirit between the prophecy quoted and the fact, as distinguished from the object. “Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, with the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border.” (Ver. 15 - 17.)

But sorrow from man's oppression and cruel suffering is not all. There is a needed discipline from the Lord which is next brought before us. “I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surety have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.” (Ver. 18-20.)

Then the Lord calls them to their cities. “Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities. How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth. A woman shall compass a man. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness. And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul. Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.” (21-26.) It is a favorite application among the fathers and many who are under their influence, that the birth of the Savior is here intended. But this is an error, and introduces a sense as incongruous with the context as with the particular phrase which has been tortured to bear the weight of the incarnation. “A woman shall compass a, man” refers, not to the birth of Christ, but to the superiority in the latter day of the once backsliding daughter over all the might of man that shall

oppose her.

A threefold declaration (first, ver. 27-30; second, ver. 31-37; and third, ver. 38-40) from Jehovah of the rich blessing of all. His people closes this word of our prophet.

The first of these promises pledges the end of travail and the sure establishment of both houses of the chosen nation. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord. In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.” (Ver. 27-30.)

The second speaks of the new covenant, not according to law but grace, which Jehovah will make with them and its and their perpetuity. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever. Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.” (Ver. 31-37.)

The chapter ends with the third promise as to the city, its limits and landmarks, which (unlike the second) is incapable of any just application to the wants, circumstances, or blessings of the Christians. It is the divine Doomsday-book of Jerusalem, the topography defined, and that security pronounced which belongs only to the mouth of God. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more forever.” (Ver. 38-40.)

Notes on Jeremiah 32

The crisis was now at hand. Jerusalem was undergoing its last siege. The king of Babylon had begun it ere the ninth year of Zedekiah closed, and took the city early in his eleventh year, after having invested it some eighteen months, though not without an interruption. The occasion of the prophet's imprisonment, during which this message came from Jehovah is first explained. “The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar. For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house. For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dolt thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; and Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes; and he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the Lord: though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper.” (Ver. 1-5.)

Then from verse 6 we have the message itself. As an old writer remarks, if the prophet was bound, the word of God was not bound. The word of Jehovah came to him, saying, “Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it. So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the Lord, and said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance is thine, and the redemption is thine; buy it for thyself. Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord. And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver. And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances. So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open: and I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison. And I charged Baruch before them, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.” (Ver. 7-15.) Thus the mournful servant of the Lord changes his sackcloth for the raiment of daily life. He had put on the attire of mourning when others vaunted of their tower of false prophecy and their arm of flesh, before the king of Babylon smote Jerusalem. Now, while all were shut up closely and himself a prisoner, the king and the people within, more his enemy than the cruel Chaldean without, and with the certainty that the city must soon be taken and Zedekiah not escape but go to Babylon a captive, he buys his cousin's field in witness that houses, and fields, and vineyards should again be possessed in the

land.

“Now when I had delivered the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed unto the Lord, saying, Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee: thou showest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the Lord of hosts, is his name, great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings: which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even unto this day, and in Israel, and among other men; and hast made thee a name, as at this day; and hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with great terror: and hast given them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey; and they came in and possessed it; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them: behold the mounts, they are come unto the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans, that fight against it; because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence: and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; and, behold, thou seest it. And thou hast said unto me, O Lord God, Buy thee the field for money, and take witnesses; for the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.” (Ver. 16-25.)

Such was the faith and the patience of this holy prophet. To bear at all cost a true testimony of Jehovah's mind to His people was far dearer to him than earthly goods, or honor, or life. When outward peace reigned, he saw the coming ruin; when the ruin was approaching its climax, he took measures, according to his discernment of the word of Jehovah, of a restoration that could not fail. Accordingly the word of Jehovah comes to the pleading prophet. “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me? Therefore thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it: and the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger. For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the Lord. For this city hath been to me as a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face, because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction. But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it. And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.” (Ver. 27-35.)

Thus nothing would set aside the speedy execution of the long-suspended sentence. From the beginning (for so it always is with man) had Jerusalem been for His anger and for His fury to this

day, making His house the especial seat of their abominations and building the high place of Baal in the valley of the son of Hinnom, with the horrid sacrifices of sons and daughters to Molech. Judgment therefore must fall on their idolatries and their iniquities. If any deny Him, He must deny them. But He abides faithful; He cannot deny Himself. “And now therefore thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.” (Ver. 36-41.) Jeremiah, like Daniel, might go his way till the end be; but then he too shall stand in his lot, and the right of inheritance shall not be lost, nor the evidence of the purchase forgotten of the field in Anathoth.

It is too plain to be mistaken, unless the mind be perverted by some false system, that Jehovah speaks of a day yet future for Israel. They have never yet been gathered out of all countries, nor have they been caused since their dispersion to dwell safely in their land. Nor has the sentence of Lo-ammi been yet reversed, nor have they had one heart and one way, fearing Jehovah always for the good of themselves and their children after them. Nor can it be pretended that the “everlasting covenant” is made with them, when they shall not depart from Jehovah and He will rejoice over them, planting them in the land in truth with all His heart and all His soul.

“For thus saith the Lord; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them. And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans. Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord.” (Ver. 42-44.)

Notes on Jeremiah 33

This chapter completes the part of the prophecy which has for its object to assure the people of their ultimate restoration to their land from captivity and dispersion. And hence it is remarkably full as well as distinct.

“Moreover the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah the second time, while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison, saying, Thus saith the Lord the maker thereof, the Lord that formed it, to establish it; the Lord is his name; call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” (Ver. 1-3.)

After this opening Jehovah warns them of the vanity of self-defense against the king of Babylon: let who might come in, it would only be to swell the ranks of the slain by the Chaldeans. “For thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the king of Judah, which are thrown down by the mounts, and by the sword; they come to fight with the Chaldeans, but it is to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in mine anger and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from this city.” (Ver. 4, 5.)

But a low estate, especially hopeless ruin before their enemies, elicits an instant assurance of blessing from the Lord. “Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.” (Ver. 6-9.) They should be built up once more in their land as at the beginning, yea much beyond what was at first. For Jehovah did not then cleanse them from all their iniquity, nor pardon their sins and transgressions against Himself. He gave them a witness of good things to come in their typical sacrifices; but He did not yet relieve them from that law which could not but be to sinners a ministry of condemnation and death. The last chapter declared that the days come that Jehovah will make a new covenant with both the houses of His people, expressly in contrast with their position under the law of old, the result of which will be an inward spirit of obedience, a real knowledge of Jehovah, and their sins remembered of Him no more. Thus will Jerusalem be to Him a name of joy, for praise and beauty, to all the nations of the earth, who bear and tremble for the good and peace He procures His people. On every side they will then learn righteousness.

“Thus saith the Lord; Again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say shall be desolate without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast, the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts: for the Lord is good: for his mercy endureth forever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause to return the captivity

of the land, as at the first, saith the Lord." (Ver. 10, 11.) As surely as He had previously threatened and was now accomplishing His threat to take from them the voice of mirth and of gladness, of the bridegroom and of the bride, so does He assure, in the face of appearances and natural results and forebodings of desolation but too suitable to guilt, that the sounds of joy should be renewed in their land, and not of nature only but the voice of them that say His praise and bring appropriate sacrifice into His house.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down. In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth them, saith the Lord." (Ver. 1214.) Peacefully shall the shepherds tend their flocks there where war had devastated most. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah." They are thus both included—a conclusive proof that no past return, or revival of tranquility under Gentile rule, meets the terms of scripture. The prophecy awaits its fulfillment.

Yet the next verses (15, 16) clearly point to the presence of the Messiah. "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." It is Messiah present, but not in humiliation, not a sufferer, but in power and glory. He is reigning. It is not a question of an earth-rejected King, sitting at God's right hand on His Father's throne. It is the great King reigning on His own throne, the throne withal of His father David. "He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land." It is totally different from His present action. His relation to us is never that of a King reigning over the Christian or over the Church. He is given as Head to the body, as by and by He will reign King over His people in their land; and all people, nations, and languages shall serve the glorious Son of man. While God is gathering out to Him the Church for heavenly glory, Judah is for the most part blinded, not saved, and Jerusalem is dwelt in safely neither by Jew nor by Gentile. In the days of which the prophet speaks Jerusalem will own her Savior God and King, and acquires a name from His own Jehovah-tsidkenu (Jehovah our righteousness); just as the apostle does not hesitate to say, in 1 Cor. 12:12, "so also is Christ," where we would have expected His body, the Church. "For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually." (Ver. 17, 18.) Neither the throne nor the sanctuary should fail in Israel: the true King, and the true Priest, should be there from the Lord.

Thus rich and precise is the divine guarantee to His people in their darkest hour. Nor is this all. Confirmation is added, as for the successor to the throne of David, and the Levites, the priests (ver. 10-22), so for the two families of the people. (Ver. 23-26.) "And the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered,

neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me. Moreover the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the Lord hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. Thus saith the Lord; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them." (Ver. 19-26.)

The Old Testament prophecies are quoted by Matthew in three ways which must not be confounded: that (■να) it might be fulfilled; so that (■πως) it was fulfilled; and then (τ■τε) was fulfilled. In the first case it is the object of the prophecy, as Matt. 1:22, 23. In the second it is an accomplishment contained in its scope, but not the sole and complete thought of the Holy Ghost, as Matt. 2:23. In the third it is simply a fact which corresponds with the quotation, in its spirit applying to it, as Matt. 2:17.

Notes on Jeremiah 34

This chapter begins a new series, in which the proof of the wickedness of the people is brought out. We see their spasmodic efforts at repentance. Alas! it was no true work of God in their conscience, but simply the pressure of calamity for a time, which led them to form resolves, in a measure after the law of the Lord, but which proved utterly powerless when the affliction was stayed forever so little a while. Hence the word comes to Jeremiah from Jehovah, “When Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people, fought; against Jerusalem, and against all the cities thereof.” And the Lord then told him to speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, from Himself, assuring him that He would “give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he should burn it with fire.” To fight it out was even to resist the Lord. It was not Nebuchadnezzar merely that was taking Jerusalem; Jehovah was giving up the city and their king of the house of David—a most solemn sign of His displeasure.

Indeed there is never any good received from a trial except it be taken from the hand of God. When humiliation comes, it is no use laying the blame on others, on this one or that one, but rather on God's people as a whole—on ourselves—more especially if we have the chief responsibility of action. Here the king had an immense place, and of course the priests also. If the king was a righteous man, Jehovah always brought blessing to the people for his sole sake: if the king was ungodly, his evil drew down chastening on the people. Alas! if there was an ungodly king, there was also an ungodly people. We may say, Like people, like king; and not only, “Like people, like priest.” In this case Jehovah intimates to Zedekiah a part of that which should befall him. “Thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth; and thou shalt go to Babylon.” (Ver. 3.) This is the more remarkable, because another prophet was given to prophesy that Zedekiah's eyes should be put out, and that he should not see Babylon. “I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans: yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there.” (Ezek. 12:13.) Both are true. His eyes did not see the king of Babylon in Babylon, but he was taken prisoner in “the plains of Jericho” and brought to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath. There his eyes were put out. After seeing his sons put to death, he was blinded by the indignant king of Babylon, and not without deserving it. For Zedekiah had behaved extremely ill before God and man. He had profaned the name of Jehovah, he had shown less respect for that name than Nebuchadnezzar himself. The Gentile chief trusted that the name of Jehovah would bind the Jewish king in his oath: but it did not. Zedekiah, the son of David, broke the oath of Jehovah, and Nebuchadnezzar's anger was great. Therefore he punished Zedekiah thus fiercely, giving him to see the death of his own sons, then putting his eyes out and bringing him to Babylon. Nevertheless his eyes did previously behold the eyes of the king of Babylon. He was confronted with the head of gold, haughty and in the pride of his power, to whom God had given universal power. Thus Ezekiel was proved true, because Zedekiah went blinded from Riblah to Babylon; and Jeremiah was proved true, because he was taken prisoner in the land, did with his eyes

behold the king of Babylon and was afterward taken to Babylon. Thus most minutely can every word of the prophets be trusted.

But there was another instructive dealing of God. Along with the humiliation that would surely come upon the king, the son of David, God tells him, “Thou shalt not die by the sword.” He might have dreaded not merely the sword, but the furnace. Nevertheless God says to him, “Thou shalt not die by the sword: but thou shalt die in peace and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings which were before thee, so shall they burn odors for thee; and they will lament thee, saying, Ah, lord! for I have pronounced the word, saith the Lord.” That is to say, he would have a funeral suited to his dignity as a king, and after the usual mode of the Jews—a bed of spices prepared to burn the king's body, and lamentations over him. The reason was this, that God, even in His judgment, carefully remembers whatever good there may have been. The Lord says, as it were, I will recompense; and He never fails. Zedekiah had acted wickedly: nevertheless his heart was towards the prophet, and he would have gladly spared him, but he was pushed on by others more wicked than himself. Consequently, when the supreme moment came, God extends mercy towards him; and thus he stands in full contrast with Jehoiakim, who had only the burial of an ass, as Jeremiah had proclaimed in an earlier chapter.

“Then the prophet spite all these words unto Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem. And the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and against Azekah” (ver. 6, 7), the cities that were intended to form a bulwark and a stay if an enemy came up against Jerusalem. But the people and the king formed a covenant, and this was what brought fresh displeasure from the Lord upon them. There was an old law from the days of the desert imposed on the children of Israel, that no Hebrew could ever be a servant to his brother longer than seven years, unless by his own voluntary choice, when his ear was bored, and he, with his wife and children, if he had any, remained servants to their master forever. But as a rule, a manservant or maidservant could only serve six years, and in the seventh they went out free. The sabbatical year proclaimed that they could no longer righteously be kept in bondage. But it had been neglected, it seems for a very long period, probably for several hundreds of years; for the prophecy of the seventy years' captivity notices this, and seems to imply a period of four hundred and ninety years, during which they had paid no heed to the sabbatical year. However that may be, “When all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his manservant, and every one his maidservant, go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed and let them go.” (Ver. 10.)

But afterward, when the sight of danger was past for the moment—for Nebuchadnezzar for a while raised the siege— “They turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids.” (Ver. 11.) Then the word of the Lord comes by Jeremiah again, “Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen.” How disgraceful then, if God had brought them out of bondage, that they should forget the will of the Lord as to their brethren in bondage. They might possess a stranger unlimitedly; but they might not keep one of their own brethren more than six years. Thus they had quite forgotten their obligations at home until the time of their affliction, when they read and obeyed, letting their Hebrew bondmen go. Hence their guilt was much greater, because they had felt their sin and their fathers' sin; they had seen what the will of God was, and having

resolved to do it under pressure of danger, directly the occasion was gone they returned to their evil ways. “Therefore thus saith the Lord, Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbor: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.” (Ver. 17.)

Nor was it merely that they had singularly lost sight of Jehovah's will and transgressed His covenant, but they contracted a solemn covenant made afresh, “when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof.” There was something similar in early days between their father Abram, as recorded in Gen. 15, and God. There was a remarkable covenant, when it is said that he took all the victims named and “divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.” (Ver. 10-12) Thus and then it was made known to him, in presence of this sacrifice, that his seed were to be afflicted four hundred years, but that the nation whom they should serve, God would judge, and afterward they should come out with great substance. “And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.” (Ver. 17.) This set forth the destiny of Israel, the smoking furnace representing their trial and affliction; the burning lamp that passed between them, the hope of the deliverance that would spring up out of darkness. Such were the dealings of God in His righteous government.

These men seem to have imitated in a manner this covenant with Abram; but in them there was no faith counted for righteousness, though they solemnly acknowledged their obligation to the will of God, passing between the calf, which was not only a sacrificial sign for confirmation before the Lord, but a kind of imprecation of death upon themselves if they were unfaithful to the covenant, like the children of Israel in Ex. 24 And so says the Lord to those who had passed between the parts of the calf; “I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth. And Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which are gone up from you.” (Ver. 20, 21.) They were not to be killed as the others, but to be taken prisoners and put to humiliation; though God might assuage their calamity, as we have seen in the case of Zedekiah. As for the city, they flattered themselves that the Babylonians would never come back again; but says the Lord, I will “cause them to return to this city; and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire: and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant.” (Ver. 22.) So solemn are the ways of Jehovah, whether with the guilty king, in not forgetting his kindness to the prophet, whatever might be the judgment of his iniquity; or with the princes and priests, the still more guilty advisers of the king. Destruction came upon them to the uttermost, as also upon the city itself where such conscienceless deeds were allowed.

Notes on Jeremiah 35

It is striking the pains God takes with His people and the way in which He condescends to employ the example of men (before of birds and beasts) as a parable for instructing His people, if they are but willing to listen. We learn that there was in the holy land at this time a tribe of the sons of Rechab. They were Kenites as to their race—the same people of whom Moses' wife came: there was, as we know, a friendly feeling between Israel and them in consequence.

The manner too in which the Lord presses home the lesson is much to be observed: “Go,” says He to Jeremiah, “unto the house of the Rechabites and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink.” This was calculated to impress the Rechabites strongly. A prophet of Jehovah sets before them cups of wine, and this too in the temple. “Then I took Jaazaniah, the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites; and I brought them into the house of the Lord.” It was not into some obscure place either in the temple, but unto one of the priests— “into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was by the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of Maaseiah, the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door.” It was by the chamber even of the heads of the priesthood and of the princes. And there it is added, “I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.” But the Rechabites were faithful; they had pledged themselves to their father a long while before. It was no new feeling; it had governed their conduct ever since his time who gave the tribe its name; and now even, under circumstances such as pressed Judea, when there was no lack of dangers and sorrow, though a prophet of the Lord bid them drink, though the wine was set before them in the temple of the Lord, they still refuse. “They said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons forever.”

It would be too much to assume that there was any direct purpose of pleasing God, or anything morally good in simply taking wine or not. It is plain God does not tempt anyone to evil: the very fact therefore that Jehovah bade the prophet bring them into the temple and set wine before them and bade them drink, shows that it is no question of moral evil. But it would have been unbecoming in those who had pledged themselves not to take it, had they done so. They were obedient to their father—this was what was right. Their father was entitled to test their obedience if he liked, and he did so; and they were true to their father and to their own filial obligation. This was what pleased the Lord, and what He uses for the correction of Israel. What is a convincing proof that the point is not one of moral evil is this—besides the charge to drink no wine, it had also been commanded them “Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents.” It is evident there is nothing at all wrong in itself in a man's having a house or sowing seed in a field: no one thinks so—at least none but a madman. Yet these being tests of their obedience, they were as much bound to abstain from sowing seed and planting vineyards as from drinking wine. But the particular test here employed was drinking wine, because I suppose the others could not have been applied so readily. Jonadab put all this before

them as a motive of obedience on the earth— “that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers. Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters; nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed: but we have dwelt in tents and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us.” There is no moral excellence in dwelling in a tent, any more than in a house; but there are circumstances where it would be more congruous and becoming. It was a beautiful sign of pilgrimage in the fathers to dwell in tents.

And so here: whatever may have been the motive in Jonadab for laying this precept upon his children, we do not know; but still they were right in dutiful obedience to him. “We have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us.” It is true there was now an exception. “But it came to pass, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians: so we dwell at Jerusalem.” It may be questioned whether they were called upon to make this an exception, and whether it was any better for them to be in Jerusalem than in the land as before. It is good always to hold fast the principle on which we are called to act; it is dangerous to allow ourselves to change. God of course is entitled to bring in new principles for new circumstances, but we must take care that it is God who does so.

“Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Loup of hosts, the God of Israel, Go and tell the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the LORD. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me. I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers; but ye have not inclined your ear nor hearkened unto me.” Such was now the condition of Israel, that God employs all sorts of figures, principally in the mouth of Jeremiah. The birds of the heavens know their appointed times, the cattle of the earth even are truer to their masters than the children of Israel to Jehovah. And here were these Gentiles, these strangers, living in tents in obedience to their father's command. How faithful they were to their promise! how honoring to their father! while Israel as plainly refuses to hearken to Jehovah. It was not that God had not taken pains with Israel. Jonadab had never toiled so hard nor so perseveringly with his sons: he had no prophets to send to them. It was not called for, even if it had been in his power. But as for Jehovah, rising up early He had spoken to them and had sent His prophets; yet they had not hearkened. Nevertheless He was willing to begin afresh and to forgive all “Amend your doings and go not after other gods to serve them.” Yet they had not inclined their ear nor hearkened to Him. Disobedience is as the sin of witchcraft: there is nothing more derogatory to God, nor is anything else more ruinous to man. And God shows that in His government of the world He notices obedience, and especially to parents too: it has His signal blessing. “Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me: therefore

thus saith the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered. And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you; therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me forever."

God is always thus, I think I may say, with the parental respect and with filial obedience, unless it be in direct opposition to Himself. It has beauty in His eyes and honor from His hand. And so it is that when—solemn sight!—the children of Israel would be given up to destruction (only not final because of the reserve of grace), Jonadab the son of Rechab was not to want a man to stand before God forever.

It is the more important to distinguish this, because it is on the same principle that God blesses even where the condition of people may be indifferent or otherwise bad. Supposing you take even a pious Catholic, God will always bless what is good. He will bless among any except where Christ is utterly rejected. The evil of Popery is not the outward rejection of Christ, but the bringing in of priesthood and ordinances between the soul and God; not taking away from the true God and the Lord Jesus, but rather the adding something of man's own. It is idolatrous. It is not openly and profanely infidel. Profane infidelity denies the true God; but the religious infidelity of Romanism shows itself in putting things between the soul and God, and thus sharing the glory which belongs to God alone with other mediators, such as the saints, the Virgin Mary, and in fact the old sacrificial system. Nevertheless, spite of all that, God will always honor men according to their fidelity. Take, for instance, such a man as Martin Booz, in the course of this very century. He was greatly used of God in the conversion of souls, though he lived and died in Romanism. It is a part of the divine government, that He will bless what is faithful in individuals even where the public state of things is far from being according to His mind; whereas, where things may be according to His word, He will withhold His blessing if hearts are not practically faithful. In the very best position God will withhold His hand where souls are untrue to Him. On the other hand, He will bless individual fidelity in positions utterly foreign to the word of God. This is a great comfort, especially in the present condition of Christendom.

Notes on Jeremiah 36

The last chapter presented the Lord's admonitions to, if not reproach of, Judah in contrast with the fidelity of the Rechabites to their father, even though their obligations were of small intrinsic account. Chapter 36 adds an awful view of the obstinate unbelief of the king with its profane issue, and the condign judgment threatened which was surely accomplished at the fitting moment. Thus the guilt of the people and the king alike comes before us in these distinct but connected words from Jehovah to Jeremiah.

The prophet was bound, but the word of God was not. He is ever superior to the shifting circumstances of man, and paramount to the hindrances which seem to preclude the testimony of His servants. “And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that this word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of the Lord: therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord, in the ears of the people in the Lord's house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord, and will return every one from his evil way: for great is the anger and the fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people. And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the Lord in the Lord's house.” (Ver. 1-8.)

The spirit of obedience ere long finds a fitting moment for serving the Lord. “And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast before the Lord to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem. Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the Lord, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the Lord's house, in the ears of all the people. When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the book all the words of the Lord, then he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's chamber: and, lo, all the princes sat there, even Elishama the scribe, and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the son of Achbor, and Gemariah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes. Then Michaiah declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people.” (Ver. 9-13.)

But the ways of God are wise as well as good. Without our own seeking it, He knows how to bring His word before the greatest of men. As Paul before governors, a king, and an emperor, so the words of the Lord through Jeremiah came into the council chamber and the court. “Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, unto Baruch, saying, Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come. So Baruch the son of Neriah took the roll in his hand, and came unto them. And they said unto him, Sit down now and read it in our ears. So Baruch read it in their ears. Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words. And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth? Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book. Then said the princes unto Baruch, Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye be. And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king. So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king.” (Ver. 14-21.) How blessed! The servant of Jehovah keeps his own place of lowliness, despised and suffering as his Master at a later day; but the message none the less surely reaches the throne.

Alas! it was a rejected testimony, and he who sat on David's throne startled his most obsequious courtiers by the boldness of his rebellion against Jehovah. “Now the king sat in the winter-house in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth. Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words. Nevertheless Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll: but he would not hear them.” (Ver. 22-25.) Jehoiakim saw no more than a roll, but his guilty conscience felt a horror of that roll which betrayed his fears under veil of the contempt which cut it up and consumed its leaves in the fire.

Vain hope to escape from the hand of Jehovah, who not only hid His servants, but repeated His threats and yet more: “But the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet: but the Lord bid them. Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned. And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the Lord; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? therefore thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not. Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah

all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words." (Ver. 26 - 32.) How implicitly we may commit ourselves and our testimony to the Lord who watches over all to do good, and to warn of evil, without ever letting go the reins over that which is beyond our control. May we only and always cherish the guidance of His word by the Spirit!

Notes on Jeremiah 37

The last two chapters presented an episode quite out of historical connection with what went before or follows after. They showed us the contrast between the sons of Rechab and the men of Judah, and the presumptuous profanity of the king, albeit Josiah's son Jehoiakim. People or prince, all was hopeless evil against the God of Israel.

We now return to the beginning of Zedekiah's history, whom the king of Babylon called to the throne instead of Jechoniah or Jehoiachin. Outwardly it was a contest between the courts of Egypt and Chaldea; in truth, it was the chastening and humiliation of the house of David and of Jerusalem under the hand of God for their rebellion against His name. “And king Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the Lord, which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah. And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the Lord our God for us. Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people: for they had not put him into prison. Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt, and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them, they departed from Jerusalem.” (Ver. 1-5.) It was the term of patience which the Lord is wont to give, when evil men do not yet openly and thoroughly pronounce, and appearances favor for a while the false against the true, and faith is thus put to the fuller test. Thus the prophet was not yet treated with manifest contempt and persecution, and the king was still seeking his prayers by one of the house of Aaron as well as by a minister of the government. The appearance of Pharaoh's army on the scene detects the hollowness of all save those who were of faith. Men would like to find God wrong and reduce His word to their own uncertainty, and to this end they avail themselves greedily of the weakness of the instruments He employs, as well as of each shift in the changeful circumstances of this world as it now is. The day is coming when the state of man and of the earth will be an adequate witness of God's government. It is not so yet, nor will it be till Jesus comes, having received for Himself the kingdom, and slays the enemies who would not have Him to reign over them. Unbelief always assumes that this world, without and before the return of the Lord to reign, is the scene of God's displayed government, and reasons on present results as the expression and criterion of His ways, than which (spite of the certainty of His ever-controlling providence) nothing can be farther from the truth. Faith knows that, while the faithfulness and care of God never fails, it is the future alone which solves and divulges the riddle of the present. For this we must patiently wait.

Now there was no faith in the policy of Zedekiah or his advisers. They were elated at their momentary relief through the intervention of Egypt, and immediately allow themselves the hope that Jeremiah was mistaken in predicting the supremacy of Nebuchadnezzar and the prostration of Judah. “Then came the word of the Lord unto the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to inquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land.

And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire. Thus saith the Lord; Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for they shall not depart. For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire." (Ver. 6-10.) Vain is the help of man against the word of God; not now for the first time had Egypt proved a broken reed, piercing the hand of such as leaned on it. The return of Pharaoh's army without a blow for Judah only deferred the prosecution of the siege by the Chaldeans, who soon came up again to destroy the city with fire.

Jeremiah at least believed the word of Jehovah, and so sought to retire from the city, when relieved for a short space, to his place in the land of Benjamin. This exposed him to the injurious suspicion of his enemies. "And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people.

And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward was there, whose name was Irijah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and d he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans. Then said Jeremiah, It is false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans. But he hearkened not to him so Irijah took Jeremiah, and brought him to the princes. Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe: for they had made that the prison. (Ver. 11-15.)

The king was not without conscience, when the prophet was sent for and faithfully adhered to the testimony of Jehovah, so humbling to Zedekiah, but assuaged his sufferings in the prison. What an evidence of the lot of him who is true to God in this world! His prophecies were vindicated, but he was persecuted notwithstanding. "When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days; then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there any word from the Lord? And Jeremiah said, There is: for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. Moreover Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison? Where are now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land? Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O my lord the king: let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee; that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there. Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city were spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison." (Ver. 16-21.) Vain indeed is the help of man, yea of princes, were they of the house of David.

Notes on Jeremiah 38

The testimony of God never fails in the end to rouse the enmity of man. And so the prophet proved, especially at their hands who seek present influence in the earth. “Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying, Thus saith the Lord, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live. Thus saith the Lord, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it. Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.” (Ver. 1-4.)

Alas! the king was a moral picture of the people; for they, like him, had a dim, feeble, ineffectual sense that Jeremiah had the mind of Jehovah. But with neither was there that energy of faith which resists the appearance of present interest; and thus all was exposed to bold men in whom a strong will wrought without conscience or fear of the Lord. To such the counsel of the prophet, which urged submission to the Chaldeans, was distasteful in the extreme. The same spirit which rebelled against Jehovah could not but refuse to bow to His chastisement and their own humiliation. But this is the only path of godly feeling and repentance. To flesh it was not to seek the pence of Israel, but the hurt. And the king yields. “Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do anything against you. Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.” (Ver. 5, 6.)

The eyes of the Lord however did not watch in vain, nor were His ears indifferent to the cry of His suffering witness. He knows how to draw out help from the least expected quarter; and so it was on this occasion. “Now when Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin; Ebed-Melech went forth out of the king's house, and spade to the king, saying, My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for there is no more bread in the city. Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die. So Ebed-Melech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. And Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so. So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.” (Ver. 7-13.)

But yielding to will for the sake of peace never satisfies conscience; and the uneasy sense of slighting God and His servant provokes the desire to hear what is most dreaded. “Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the third entry that is in the house of the Lord: and the king said unto Jer. 1 will ask thee a thing: hide nothing from me. Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death? and if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me? So Zedekiah the king sware secretly unto Jeremiah, saying, As the Lord liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life. Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house: but if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hands.” (Ver. 14-18.)

When the eye is not single, the body is a prey to dark thoughts and groundless fears; He is unseen and forgotten who alone is to be held in awe. “And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me. But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the Lord, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live. But if thou refuse to go forth, this is the word that the Lord hath spewed me: And, behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house shall be brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those women shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee: thy feet have sunk in the mire, and they are turned away back. So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans: and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon: and thou shalt cause this city to be burned with fire.” (Ver. 19-23.)

The chapter closes with the king's anxiety lest the princes should hear of the interview with the prophet. What a state of things! But is it so very different now? I doubt it. The highest of this world are often its veriest slaves; and a king is of all men least free as to God's testimony before his court. It is not a new thought, that a real Christian is apt to make a bad and weak monarch. For conscience and policy are sorry companions and allies, which can never rely on each other's succor. Here the result was painful in the extreme, and the cowardice of the king dragged down the prophet into the least worthy passage of his checkered life. “Then said Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die. But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and say unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king, hide it riot from us, and we will not put thee to death; also what the king said unto thee: then thou shalt say unto them, I presented my supplication before the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house to die there. Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him: and he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they left off speaking with him; for the matter was not perceived. So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was there when Jerusalem was taken.” (Ver. 24-28.)

It is in Christ that the light shone in its perfection; for He, He only, is the true light. Yet, wondrous grace! we who were darkness are made light in the Lord. Falsehood and deceit are now fully judged; as there was none in Him, so all is condemned that was ours in His cross, and the life of

which we thenceforward live is Christ. Hence in Christianity, as in Him, nothing is tolerable which is inconsistent with the nature and glory of God.

Notes on Jeremiah 39

The inevitable hour was now at hand. Hopes founded on man are vain, most of all for God's people when He is morally judging. Unbelief is abundant in nothing but devices to parry (not so much conviction as) submission to God. At length, however, the due moment arrives to accomplish the warning so long slighted, and then the stouthearted become cravens so much the more because they have a guilty conscience. “In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it. And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth day of the month, the city was broken up. And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, even Nergal-sharezer, Samgar-nebo, Sarsechim, Rab-saris, Nergal-sharezer, Rab-mag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon. And it came to pass, that when Zedekiah the king of Judah saw them, and all the men of war, then they fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls: and he went out the way of the plain.” (Ver. 1-4.)

It is solemn to observe how little the spirit that has yielded to man's thoughts against God's word remembers in the moment of supreme need what might even yet have profited both city and people and prince. Bad not the prophet assured Zedekiah that, if he went forth to the king of Babylon's princes, he and his house should live, and the city should not be burnt with fire? Alas! it is one of the effects of the evil heart that departs from the living God that it always seems to forget the word when it is most wanted, only to feel its force when it has again betaken itself to some new plan of its own, as disappointing as all before it. How bitter to recollect too late, that all the heart clung to must be given up to vengeance and the enemy, and that the destruction sure to follow is the fruit of one's own folly. “But the Chaldeans' army pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him. Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah. Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon. And the Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem.” (Ver. 5-8.)

Let it be observed how the facts recorded here explain the seeming inconsistency between the statements of Jer. 34:3 and Ezek. 12:13. Both prophets implied that, though he might try to escape, he should be taken; both affirmed that he must go to Babylon. But Ezekiel predicted “yet shall he not see it (Babylon, the land of the Chaldees), though he shall die there;” Jeremiah predicted “thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth.” To a superficial reader this might seem hard to reconcile, if not a contradiction. But such a thought would be only ignorance, not to speak of irreverence; for they each gave out from God beforehand what was made good in the history of the case. For the fugitive king was pursued and overtaken before he crossed the Jordan; and the king of Babylon in Riblah, after judging the matter, had Zedekiah's sons slain before their guilty father's eyes, then put out

Zedekiah's eyes, bound him with chains and carried him to Babylon. Thus he did not see Babylon, though he went there; yet he did see the indignant conqueror's eyes who spoke with him mouth to mouth. No word of the Lord falls to the ground.

Nevertheless the riddance was not complete. The poor did not fail in the land; some were left in it—a pledge, little as the stranger thought, of the return of a poor remnant, and of a nation yet to be poor in spirit when God will bring back the captivity of His people, and Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad. “Then Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained. But Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard. left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.” (Ver. 9, 10.)

But there is respect for God sometimes where it might be by some least expected. “Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard, saying, Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee. So Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard sent, and Nebushasban, Rab-saris, and Nergal-sharezer, Rab-mag, and all the king of Babylon's princes; even they sent, and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison, and committed him unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should carry him home: so he dwelt among the people.” (Ver. 11-14.)

While imprisoned Jeremiah had a message from Jehovah for him who had interceded for the prophet when cast into the dungeon and about to die of hunger in the mire where he had sunk. God forgets not mercy for the righteous who skewed mercy, though His judgments must be executed on the haughty city where the evil counselors lived who urged the feeble faulty son of David to his ruin. “Now the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying, Go and speak to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be accomplished in that day before thee. But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the Lord: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid. For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord.” (Ver. 15-18.) Trust in the Lord is never in vain, though none but Himself could see Ebed-melech's for its scant measure. It is better then to trust in Jehovah than to put confidence in man; it is better to trust in Jehovah than to put confidence in princes. He is of all power and might against the enemy; and His grace toward ourselves knows no bounds.

Notes on Jeremiah 40

This is the first of a series of chapters which present the disorder and moral confusion that reigned among the Jews left behind in or near the land when the rest were carried captives to Babylon. Judgment by the hand of man has no softening effect on those who slight the word of God. We shall find those who would not bow to the chastening of Jehovah false and treacherous in their dealings with their brethren. The heathen shine in comparison with a reckless Jew without the fear of God, who in His word throws no veil over those that, nominally His people, had their hearts far from Him.

“The word that came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, after that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away captive unto Babylon. And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The Lord thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place. Now the Lord hath brought it, and done according as he hath said: because ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you.” (Ver. 1-3.) We see hence that it is easy even for a man who has no part in God's blessing for His people to own the truth after prophecy is accomplished, especially when it is to one's own exaltation over the fallen adversaries. Nebuzar-adan can talk piously when his master bad gained the victory over Jerusalem according to the declaration of the Lord. It is confessed that He had warned, and finally accomplished His word, and this because of their sins.

“And now, behold I loose thee this day from the chains which were upon thine hand. If it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come; and I will look well unto thee; but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land is before thee: whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go.” (Ver. 4.) But Jeremiah had no heart for Chaldea, whatever attractions might seem to be there. He preferred to suffer in the land with the meanest that man left behind. “Now while he was not yet gone back, he said, Go back also to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon hath made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people: or go wheresoever it seemeth convenient unto thee to go. So the captain of the guard gave him victuals and a reward, and let him go. Then went Jeremiah unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and dwelt with him among the people that were left in the land.” (Ver. 5, 6.) It was love to abide in the scene of their humiliation; it was a pledge of restoration.

But the people of God can never be a sphere of ease, least of all can they afford security save where faith looks straight to the Lord. “Now when all the captains of the forces which were in the fields, even they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and of the poor of the land, of them that were not carried away captive to Babylon; then they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, and the sons of Epbai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah

the son of a Maachathite, they and their men." (Ver. 7, 8.)

Things however were all out of course, and the return of the scattered captains and their forces was nothing, because the Lord was not at all in their thoughts. And a strange inversion is seen in the governor swearing to them, not they to him. "And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan aware unto them and to their men, saying, Fear not to serve the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you. As for me, behold, I will dwell at Mizpah, to serve the Chaldeans, which will come unto us: but ye, gather ye wine, and summer fruits, and oil, and put them in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that ye have taken." (Ver. 9, 10.) Nothing could be more conciliatory than the governor's words nor more sincere than his ways. For he was content to do his duty to the conqueror in the distressful condition of the land, but to serve the people to the utmost of his power. And this had its effect. "Likewise when all the Jews that were in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that were in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan; even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruits very much." (Ver. 11, 12.)

Thus there might have been a state of things, far from bright certainly, but by no means destitute of mercy from the Lord for the poor in the land. But sin ruins all and everywhere; and ambition and intrigue, treachery and violence, can work in prostrate Judea as surely as in victorious Babylon and more painfully. Evil men find nothing so intolerable as the good; and their own deep obligations sometimes may make the purpose so much the worse. Nor has wickedness long to wait for an opportunity, even if it have no excuse to cover its shame. A wicked Jew lends himself to the plans of a heathen neighbor, jealous of any order or mitigation of sorrow in the land. "Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were in the fields, came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, and said unto him, Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee? But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed them not." (Ver. 13, 14.)

Thus, God did not fail to give timely and sufficient warning of the danger that hung over Gedaliah. And surely he was imprudent and careless to have despised it. But a good man does not love to hear evil; and having no feeling but of kindness toward others is slow to credit the malice of those he had only sought to serve. Nevertheless in this case it was not without fault. He was in a public and responsible position, and his life was of no small moment both for the help of the poor and as a security against the suspicion or the displeasure of the Chaldeans. When ample witnesses, more than two or three, bore their testimony to him of the plot between the icing of the Ammonites and Ishmael against his life, Gedaliah ought to have inquired further and stood on his guard. But he believed them not and soon paid the price of his temerity.

It is not that Johanan was much better than Ishmael; as we shall see in the subsequent course of events, he had no real faith in God's word and hardened himself in pride and rebellion of heart. And it is possible that Gedaliah knew there was little to choose between them; and so rejected the good warning no less than the bad offer to get rid of Ishmael made by Johanan. "Then Johanan the son of Kareah spake to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly, saying, Let me go, I pray thee, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no man shall know it: wherefore should he slay thee, that

all the Jews which are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish? But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said unto Johanan the son of Kareah, Thou shalt not do this thing: for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael." (Ver. 15, 16.) But in that evil day it was not wise nor well to despise the report that came even from a suspicious quarter. And Gedaliah, had he waited on God, would have been less quick either to impute falsehood to the one or to have acquitted the other. May we learn, though in another way suited to the Christian calling, to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves!

Notes on Jeremiah 41

The history of the degradation of the Jews in or near the land is still pursued. “Now it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah. Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, even with Gedaliah, at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, and the men of war.” (Ver. 1-3.) It is not an unmeaning description that the Holy Spirit adds to the name and kin of Ishmael, “of the seed royal.” Ordinarily and rightly this would have been a guarantee of help to a governor, and a stay and shelter to the people. But God was forgotten, His judgments as well as His will slighted, and human corruption takes its course where it was least becoming. Truly the ruin of Israel was complete, when the seed royal sank into the basest form of cunning, treachery, and murder, and this of the best of their own people, yea, of God's people in the goodly land, now a moral as well as material desert.

Nor was it only jealousy of the good man who fell unsuspectingly at his own board, where he had hospitably received these emissaries of Belial; nor was it simple rebellion against the conquering king of Babylon, which then broke out against the native governor and the foreign soldiers at Mizpah; the royal desperado had tasted blood and would pursue his desperate career, careless whom or why he slew. “And it came to pass the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew it, that there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, even fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the Lord. And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went; and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. And it was so, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, and cast them into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that were with him.” (Ver. 4-7.)

It adds to the horrors of the picture too, that Ishmael was as avaricious as he was violent and deceitful. “But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he forbare, and slew them not among their brethren.” (Ver. 8.)

Who can doubt that God was pleased to take away Gedaliah, and those who sorrowed over the desolations of Israel, from evil to come? It was mercy to themselves; it was an additional chastening on the guilty people, high or low, that those who did and felt most becomingly should be swept away, and that by their brethren's hands. What a stigma, that a trench made for self-defense should become the promiscuous burying-place of the best of the remnant thus shamelessly put to death! “Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men, whom he had slain because of Gedaliah, was it which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha

king of Israel: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with them that were slain." (Ver. 9.)

In furtherance, apparently, of the designs concocted with the king of the Ammonites, Ishmael proceeds next to carry away those whom he did not slay. "Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that were in Mizpah, even the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites." (Ver. 10.) Yet even when God permits the severest measures of shame and suffering, He disappoints the guilty in the moment of their greatest success. "But when Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done, then they took all the men, and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and found him by the great waters that are in Gibeon. Now it came to pass, that when all the people which were with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, then they were glad. So all the people that Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah cast about and returned, and went unto Johanan the son of Kareah." (Ver. 11-14.)

It is true that Ishmael was not slain. Possibly to return bootless, and disappointed of the prey, to the king who had sent him as a destroyer of his own people and a plunderer for the Ammonites, may have been for the moment a more bitter cup to the conspirators.

Alas! he who delivered the captives and put to flight their enemy was no true friend of Israel, because he paid little heed to the word of Jehovah. "But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites. Then took Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, from Mizpah, after that he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, even mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the eunuchs, whom he had brought again from Gibeon: and they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem, to go to enter into Egypt, because of the Chaldeans: for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land." (Ver. 15-18.) Fear is an evidence of unbelief as certainly if not so grossly as bold or treacherous rebellion. The prophet had warned them to submit to the king of Babylon, not to flee into Egypt. What was the issue of this disobedience, flowing from distrust, we have yet to learn. How blessed for the believer that he is entitled to trample on fears, and to confide without anxiety to the word of the Lord!

Chapter 126

Jeroboam and Rehoboam or God in Government

God's glory must be maintained. “Before all the people I will be glorified” was God's announcement by Moses to Aaron in the day of his brother's greatest honor and deepest distress. (Lev. 10:3.) His sons Nadab and Abihu had “offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out a fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.” A terrible end to a glorious morning was this judicial action of God on Aaron's sons. “And Aaron held his peace.” He was silent, What could he say to this but acquiesce in it? It was right, it was fitting, that the God of the whole earth should resent an affront offered Him by those whom He had brought into such close official relationship to Himself. If all Israel had failed, they ought, as the tribe of Levi did on another memorable occasion, to have cared for the glory of Jehovah, and to have sedulously guarded against the introduction of unhallowed fire into the tabernacle of God. They did not; for they introduced it, and died.

If men fail to care for God's glory, He may, for a time, forbear, but in the end He must act: He cannot deny Himself. He cannot acquiesce in the failure of His creature in this or any other matter. The Gentiles, when they knew God, glorified Him not as God: so He gave them up to uncleanness. (Rom. 1:21-24.) Belshazzar, though he knew the facts of Nebuchadnezzar's sickness, glorified not God: so the handwriting appeared to announce his approaching doom. (Dan. 5:23.) Jeroboam displaced Him in Israel when he set up the golden calves: so God had to show that He was God. Rehoboam with Judah forsook His law: so He made them feel the consequences of their sin.

Because of the grievous abominations and idolatry sanctioned by Solomon, Jeroboam was appointed by God to be the future king of the ten tribes. The kingdom became his, because God could not suffer sin in Israel without taking notice of it; and the kingdom would be his and his children's without change of dynasty, if he walked in God's ways, as David had done. The reason of his having it and the condition of his keeping it were both plainly declared on that day, outside the walls of Jerusalem, when Elijah the Shilonite rent the new garment, and gave him ten pieces out of the twelve. And God proved Himself faithful to His word. Solomon was to be king all the days of his life, because of David's sake; but the kingdom should be taken out of the hands of his son, and the ten tribes should be given to Jeroboam.

An exile in Egypt till Solomon's death, Jeroboam was recalled after Rehoboam had ascended the throne, and quickly found himself the accepted ruler of these ten tribes. The sure result of disobedience was clearly manifested when he was made king. He knew the reason of his elevation. The beneficial effect, on the children, of the father's obedience he had witnessed in the continuance of the kingdom unbroken in the hands of Solomon. He knew the cause of the delay between the promise of the kingdom by the mouth of Abijah at Jerusalem, and his possession of it at Shechem. If ever there was a man who had been initiated into the cause of God's governmental dealings with His creatures, that man was Jeroboam. The relation of cause and effect in the severance of the kingdom in twain he knew perfectly; and the terms on which he could retain for himself and family the kingdom he knew also. To retain the kingdom he must be obedient to God;

to lose it, he had only to be regardless of God's glory, and take his own way. He chose the latter alternative; he set up the golden calves in open hostility to the altar at Jerusalem: so God had to intervene, and to glorify Himself.

Once seated on the throne of Israel, to keep possession of it was his object. Abijah had years before told him how to do this, but he followed his own heart, and drew Israel into grievous and abiding sin. The were set up at Dan and Bethel. A priesthood al he instituted; and a house of high places he built, in imitation, doubtless, of the temple on Mount Moriah. He invented a feast, too, in the eighth month instead of keeping the one God appointed for the seventh. All being ready, following the example of Solomon at the dedication of the temple, be stood to burn incense on the altar. At the dedication of the temple God manifested His presence, and showed to all He took knowledge of what went on: the fire descended and consumed the sacrifice, and the glory of the Lord filled the house. At the institution of the feast Jeroboam devised, God likewise manifested that He witnessed what Israel were engaged in: a prophet appeared, and cried against the altar but just erected for a new worship. He announced its destruction, and foretold that the object Jeroboam had at heart, to keep Israel permanently separated from Judah, his sin had effectually prevented. A child born to the house of David, Josiah by name, should exercise authority where Jeroboam then stood, the religion and the rites that day inaugurated should pass away; and the altar devoted, as people might suppose, to the worship of Jehovah under the figure of the calves, should be defiled by the burning on it of men's bones. The priesthood Jeroboam had appointed God disowned; and where they had offered up sacrifices, priests of the high places should be sacrificed; and a sign was given as an earnest of the fulfillment of this prediction—the altar was rent and the ashes poured out. The Lord Jehovah had been that day grievously dishonored, and He would show it; He rejected the sacrifice. No fire from above descended to consume it, but the altar on which it was laid was rent underneath it. Jeroboam had imitated Solomon, and grievously sinned against God. God rejected the imitation, and more markedly signified His displeasure. He accepted Solomon, and answered his prayer. He regarded not Jeroboam; for the prophet He sent addressed himself to the altar.

Attempting to seize God's prophet, Jeroboam had to own the power of the Lord: his arm dried up so that he could not withdraw it—outstretched in the very act of rebellion against God, it remained a spectacle to all the people. At the altar he had reared, before the calf he had made, the power of Jehovah was displayed. His arm remained stretched out, spewing what he would do; but control over it he had lost—a striking illustration of man's impotence when arrayed against God. Jehovah on that occasion made all to see that He was above and distinct from the idols; and Jeroboam had to confess before all the company of Israel there assembled that Jehovah alone could help him. “Entreat now the face of the Lord thy God, and pray for me that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again.” The prayer was immediately answered and God was the more glorified, His power was exhibited in fixing that outstretched arm, and His power was seen in re-invigorating it.

But whilst Jeroboam was healed, not one particle of the judgment then pronounced was averted, nor was it delayed a single day beyond the stipulated time. It was the prophet He accepted, not Jeroboam, The prayer of the man of God received an immediate answer, but not because God would show mercy to Jeroboam; for the king did not turn to God, nor humble himself before Him, neither did the people. God vindicated His name where it had been so flagrantly outraged; but He

did no more, because they were not in a condition to have mercy shown them; yet He was ready to be merciful. That was, that is, His character. “He delighteth in mercy” is the revelation of Himself given us in Mic. 7:18. “The Lord God gracious and merciful,” &c., such was the statement, as He would be displayed in government, made to Moses when in the cleft of the rock at Mount Sinai. It needs only the opportunity to display this; and the opportunity is furnished when men are ready to receive it. The history of Rehoboam shows this.

For three years after Rehoboam's accession Judah walked in the ways of David and Solomon. Then they failed, and forsook the law of the Lord, and Shishak king of Egypt was raised up to be their enemy. This was the first time since the exodus that the power of Egypt was felt by the children of Israel. In the fifth year of Rehoboam Shishak invaded Judah. Whilst Judah glorified God by serving Him, He prospered them; when they forsook His laws, He dealt with them; and speedily did the punishment overtake them. Strong for three years, within the two following ones Rehoboam found himself weak and defenseless, a foreign power ravaging the country, and Jerusalem itself threatened. The defended cities proved no barrier, for the invaders were a great host. What were the people to do? The princes assembled at Jerusalem were powerless to avert the threatened calamity. The king and his counselors with all their wisdom could not divert the conqueror from his purpose. God then sent a message by Shemaiah, telling them of their sin, and that He should deal justly with them. “Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hands of Shishak,” was the message Shemaiah had to deliver. What a message was this! Who could say a word against it? It was perfectly just. God dealt with them as they had dealt with Him. He could not pass over their sin. They reaped the fruits of their own actions.

Perfectly just, yet how terrible was this! not a hint of mercy, not a glimmer of hope. Who could support such a manner of dealing with them on the part of God? Let any poor child of Adam, who trusts to his own righteousness, ask himself if he could stand to be dealt with by God strictly—as he has done to God, to receive from God according to what he has done and no more. What man is there who, in his inmost soul, would not shrink, if such a proposal were made to him? But how did the king, the princes, act when Shemaiah delivered his crushing message? They glorified God, and that moment mercy was vouchsafed them. “The Lord is righteous” was their reply. They humbled themselves, and said no more. They deserved such treatment. They took their right place before Him. They justified God, without excusing themselves. Jeroboam asked to have his arm healed. He felt the inconvenience and desired its removal, but not one word in justification of God escaped his lips. Rehoboam and his people asked for nothing. We read not of any prayer for the removal of Shishak. They justified God, and He was manifest to them. “Because they have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance, and my wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak.” How ready is God to respond to people when they own Him as the righteous Ruler! Ahab humbled himself, and God deferred the threatened judgment till his son's day. Jezebel did not follow her husband, so the dogs ate her flesh in Jezreel.

What a character is that of our God! Righteous He is, yet merciful. “Because they have humbled themselves.” They took their right place before Him, therefore He could say, “I will grant them some deliverance. It is God in government that we have set forth in these two histories, a warning and an encouragement to all who will take heed. Shishak plundered Jerusalem, the golden shields were taken away, the treasures of the Lord's house and of the king's house he got possession

of—he took all. A sorrowful time it must have been for Judah; but the secret of the Lord they knew. His wrath should not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. Israel was already given up, having acquiesced in the sin of Jeroboam. (2 Kings 14:16.) Judah deserved the same treatment; but, when they humbled themselves, God granted them some deliverance, and it was not till the reign of Manasseh that the fiat went forth for their captivity in Babylon. (2 Kings 21:12-16; 24:4, 5.)

God's ways in grace we may well trace, but His ways in government also. God must be glorified. If His people fail in this, He must act against them; but if they humble themselves, He can show mercy, and He surely will. Rehoboam was strong for three years, then weakness supervened. The cause was shown: He humbled himself, and Judah with him, and the impending chastisement was mitigated, and he again became strong in Jerusalem. Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor, no despicable enemy in the field as Abijam found; but of him, after the establishment of the calves, and the mission of the prophet to Bethel, we read not that he prospered. “Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered?” asked Job. Shall a sinner humble himself before God without experiencing mercy at His hand? Let Rehoboam, Ahab, and Manasseh reply.

John 14

In John 14 (after the opening verses) we have first Christ himself on earth, and the Father seen in Him; then Christ in heaven, and we knowing by the Comforter sent down that we are in Him and He in us. In chapter 15 is our place on earth (the true place of the disciples then with him, but still in principle our place on earth now), not in heavenly union but in responsibility, first, for fruit, then for love—both that our joy may be full, and His joy abide in us; for both were fulfilled in him as he intimates.

John 17

It is very natural that Jesus should have deeply felt, before leaving this world, all the circumstances in which His disciples were about to find themselves. At the moment when the Son had accomplished His work, and completely glorified the Father in the midst of all the difficulties and all the malice of Satan (a moment which has not had, and which will not have, its equal, whether in time or in eternity), it was natural, I say, that He should put all before the Father.

Not only has Jesus perfectly glorified the Father, but there is no one who, like Himself, has felt all the effects, all the consequences of sin. He realized all, and has placed us in the same circumstances as Himself. He felt and expressed all the weak position of His disciples, according to all their need, and according to all the resources which He knew to be in the Father.

He said these things in the world, where He had been the man of sorrows, and where He had suffered much. In virtue of the work He accomplished, He can enjoy all the privileges of His work; but He takes this into consideration, that His disciples are left in the world.

The natural heart does not feel the privileges of the child of God. The natural heart does not feel its wants. Pride does not see difficulties; hence it “goes before destruction.” The natural heart escapes many things which are a weight to the child of God. We see that in Jesus. He does not hide from Himself His position. “I have,” He says, “a baptism to be baptized with,” &c. He did not hide from Himself the state to which sin had reduced man, and the consequences of sin. Love overcame the weight which He had always on His soul, as we see in Gethsemane; yet He remained calm, because He committed all to the Father. We see Him entirely alone, but calm; full of love, and always capable of acting in love.

At the time, then, that one does not feel grace, one has not the same wants. The thoughts of being brought low, manifested in this chapter, do not find any sympathy in the natural heart. Christian men are too disposed to avoid knowing this state of abasement; but therefore they do not know the immense resources which are in God. Such is the folly of our hearts!

In verse 10 we have the position where Jesus places His own in their privileges. In presenting to them their resources, He then speaks to the Father. It is the expression of the Son's heart. “The hour is come” —an hour more memorable than that of the creation—an hour during which evil and its effects were conquered.

The glory which He claims is not that which flows from the will of the Father, and which He possessed, as Son, before coming into the world: it is another thing. It is because He had humbled Himself, not to do His own will, but to do that of the Father, because He had been obedient unto death, and had taken upon Himself the consequences of sin, that He could be glorified in saving His Church.

The abandoning of His own will shows itself in the answer which He made to two of His disciples, who asked to be placed, the one on His right hand and the other on His left, in His kingdom. That

is not in my power, answered Jesus; but in my Father's. This giving up of His own will to us is of infinite value; it is thus that we can have a share in this glory; for, if He placed Himself under the power of Satan, it was because He was capable of doing it. He must needs be the Son of God to accomplish this work, and He would do it in grace: otherwise, we should have no share in it. He has taken the glory as man that we might possess it; for we could not have that of the Sou.

He was, in death, under the power of Satan, but He could not be held by it; and it was so in order that we might have a share in this glory. He puts Himself in the lowest place in order to be able to say, Father, glorify me; and not, I am glorified. Mark well, that though He was humbled, it was perfection, in order that the heart of the Father should be satisfied in glorifying Him.

What power of Satan was not destroyed when the Prince of Life underwent death! Thus God has been fully glorified, and Jesus also, because, as man, He has fully this glory. Why did the Son need to be glorified? It was for us. He had placed Himself as low as our sins had put us. Now He glorifies the Father in His own. (Ver. 4.) We see that power has been given Him “in heaven and in earth.” This power was given Him because He humbled Himself. This is very precious: for it is because He was man that it could be given Him; because it was His as Son.

It was in order that He might give life to all those whom the Father gave Him, and that He might claim His right for them, and against those who do not recognize Him. He does not speak much of the latter in this chapter, because His heart was full of His disciples.

He is the Head of creation. Col. 1:15-17: “The firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

All that glorifies our Head ought to be precious to us. It was needful He should reconcile all things, according to what is said in the same chapter, verses 18-20: “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”

Christ was head of the creation, and head of all men; they are given to Christ, and He refers all to His Father. It is God who gives. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

Power was given Him, that He should give eternal life to as many as are given Him. This life is to know God the Father. “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” Jesus begins to speak of the work which He accomplished on the earth. “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” “I have glorified thee on the earth.” What is it, that the first Adam had done? He had owned neither the power, nor the goodness of God; he had denied all that God was towards him. The last Adam, on the contrary, had felt all that which pride prevents us from feeling. He felt the forsaking of God as to His soul; and He could say, “I have glorified thee.” The more evil there was down here, the more the Father was glorified. Never did irritation enter into Him; no contradiction ever prevented His having the same heart for man and for God. What is precious, is, that it is man who has perfectly glorified God: He would do it, and He

has accomplished it. It was in man that it was needed to be done, for it is in man that God was dishonored: it is there that Satan reigns and governs; it is there that the image of God is marred; it is there that God has been dishonored before the angels; but it is there also that He has been glorified in Jesus—man—not by avoiding the evil, but by placing Himself in the midst of all this evil. The more evil there had been, the more the Father had been glorified.

As man, Jesus accomplished the work that the Father gave Him—the work of grace; it has been perfectly accomplished; hence the Father can rest in His Son, having been fully satisfied. He could say, “This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And hence God can pour out His heart into the heart of a sinner.

God could give outward blessings, as the sun and the rain in their season, but He could not be in communion with man. His heart can speak to Jesus—man; He could not keep from saying, “This is my beloved Son;” no more than John the Baptist when, seeing Jesus, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God.”

The heart of the Father wanted to save. He committed this work to the Son, and this work was perfect. Hence Jesus could say, “And now, O Father, glorify thou me.” There is nothing more to be done. What rest for the soul! There is nothing but glory to receive. All the rest is done. This word “now” shows that God had found in Jesus that which perfectly responded to His heart.

There is rest. There is perfect equality. Jesus can say, with a boldness which shows what He is, “Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” And we, by the Holy Spirit, are admitted to these conversations between the Father and the Son. Already, by the Holy Spirit, we, in our measure, understand what a place the Lord has given us.

The holiness and righteousness of God could find nowhere to rest, like the dove out of the ark. But in Jesus He has found perfect rest. God sought morally as we seek a friend; He has found it in Christ; He cannot seek elsewhere.

From verse 6 Jesus speaks of what He has done for His disciples: “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.” “I have manifested thy name unto them” —the name of Father. There were, for Christ, certain relationships, which He could not know save as man, and as man of sorrows; but He knew the Father and committed Himself to the Father. “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me.” He was placing their hearts before the Father, where He was Himself. As He knew the Father, so He makes Him known to them.

If any one has been very kind to me, how would I speak of him to a person to whom I wish to make him known? Whilst He was down here, He spoke of the Father in telling them all that He knew of Him. He tells them that He is His Father and their Father.

God can seek nothing in us, but He can give us all, finding all in Christ. Oh! may we realize what Christ has revealed to us, namely, that the Father is for us. Is this the habit of our souls?

We become the objects of the communications between the Father and the Son. The greater things are, the more magnificent and intimate, the more are they worthy of God, and by infinite grace we are the objects of them. I do things which I should not do if I knew the Father better; and I should also not do things which I do. It is a question not only of not doing what is forbidden; but

also of being in the relationship of father and child.

The soul is raised up. The Holy Spirit makes us feel the love of the Father. He brings us into liberty by showing us not that we are little, but how great God is. When we are altogether preoccupied with Him, this liberty produces a holiness which has immovable foundations. God and Christ were occupied with us, when Christ was still in the world and in our position; He has put us where He is.

That produces effects of holiness, because it always brings us nearer to the Father, who is light and holiness. When I see the fruits of the Spirit, I say, God is there, for it is God. It is not only this that God works in me, but also that I partake of His nature by the Holy Ghost which is given me.

Jesus, having manifested the Father's name to His own, comes now to speak to Him of their position in the world, while separated from Him. He introduces that by saying that the disciples had received Him not only as Messiah, but above all that they had understood this revelation of the Father, that they were no longer of this world, and that they had understood that all came from God.

“They have known,” says Jesus, “that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.” They saw the relationship of unity with the Father, relationship until then unknown, and which has been made manifest in the humiliation of Jesus. The Son has manifested, not only as a Jew, but as man, and man in the lowest place: in that position He received all from the Father. The Father sends the Son, and the Son says, “They have believed that thou didst send me.”

When the Lord speaks to His disciples, He speaks to them according to the position of grace which He made for them, and not according to the realization which they had of it. God always speaks to us as to children who know that they are children (it is their own fault if they forget it, or if they do not know it). Jesus says, “Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. (John 14:4.) Philip says, “Show us the Father.” Well, it is the same thing with regard to the action of the Holy Ghost. There are many Christians who have not understood that they are one; and they have to be reproached with this: for Jesus said, Ye shall know I am in you, when the Spirit shall be given unto you. He speaks not according to what is realized, but according to His love and the privileges which He has given us. He has made us partakers, not of His divinity, but of all that the Father gave Him as man. He has such confidence in His disciples, that He gives them the words which the Father gave Him. “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine.” I pray for those who have received Thy words.

The Lord acts as apostle for the world, but as priest for His elect, for those who are manifested. Those who are not yet manifested are doubtless known of God; but they do not receive all the care which is necessary to Christians in order to be kept in this world. Those who are not manifested are not responsible; but as to Christians, all that makes them feel their responsibility is very precious; for they are placed here below as representatives of Christ.

Jesus says, “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” And who is the one who understands that be is sent as Christ? And who does not feel that he needs grace in order to represent Him? It is then most important to understand the position of the elect who are entrusted with representing Christ before the world (it is not that this touches salvation). Jesus says, “I am glorified in them;” and those who are not manifested do not glorify Him; it is therefore only for those that are manifested that He prays; and it is they who become the

subject of the communications between the Father and the Son.

That which is dear to the Father is dear to the Son; if the Son loves the Father, He must pray for us; if the Father loves the Son, He must glorify His Son in us. It is a wonderful position which the Lord has made known to us. These are the two motives which, His work being accomplished, Christ presents to the Father. If Christ had been the Messiah owned by the Jews, He could have remained in the world: but as Priest, He could not remain there; and as to us, we are exposed to all the evil, without having the presence of Christ, and we need something sure to rest upon. This leads to a much deeper sounding of the heart.

Neither was there a need of a clean heart, when Jesus was upon the earth: His disciples could go and ask Him what the will of the Father was; but now we must have the Holy Ghost, the intention of Christ; and this takes place when we realize the communion of the Father. It is a position still more blessed than that which the disciples bad. On the other hand, the Christian who is not in that communion may go astray. All intelligence depends upon the state of the soul. It is not with us as with a servant to whom it is said, Do this. It is the presence of the Holy Ghost which makes us know the intention of the Father.

We cannot walk in the world with blessing if we are not in communion with the Lord, and then we are only like servants. The Christian has forgotten that, and thence it is there is so much darkness. Christ is no longer in the world; but as to us, we are in the world, and we have to manifest things which are outside the world, which are in heaven. Hence it is impossible to discern the things of God with the flesh, even for a Christian who is not faithful, for he loses all discernment, and he lowers himself to the level of all that surrounds him, if he does not seek exclusively the approbation of the Father.

Jesus says, “Holy Father, keep” them; that is, for His disciples. He is “Holy Father” for the disciples, and “righteous Father” for the world. “O righteous Father,” He says, “the world hath not known thee.” The world and I can no longer walk together; and the Father had to choose between the Son and the world. “Keep them,” not with respect to the things of this world, but as thy children, for glory; not to spare them suffering, but for eternity.

He cherishes us as a Father, who does not permit a single hair of His children to fall without His permission. Those things which appear paltry and little are of some interest to a father and mother, and God loves us with a perfect love. He takes cognizance of all that relates to His children, and of all that concerns them in whatever degree it may be; and all that does not lead us into the glory He takes cognizance of. That is why He chastens us, for He is the “Holy Father.” He keeps us from evil by the warnings of His grace, by His word, by reproof, by the joys of the family of God (a great means which the Holy Ghost employs), and by the chastisements which He allows to fall upon man outwardly, so that the inward man be kept.

The flesh always pens itself in, because it is selfish. When we are in the Spirit, there is always unity. Three things especially compose the joy of Christ. Being the object of the Father's joy, His heart enjoyed His communion, and that also belongs to us. Obedience was His food, His meat, the joy of His soul. It is the same with us. As we are the objects of the exercise of this love of the Father, there is a joy for us in the exercise of that love. He makes us partakers of that joy. If there is a conversion by our means, the joy of Christ is in us. It is the Spirit which acted in Christ. He

could be a fountain of love, although His heart was “withered” through all that was in the world. Wonderful position—position of responsibility, it is true; but is the joy of Christ who is for us, not only the joy which we shall have in heaven, but which we have already in this world.

The world hates as soon as there is a manifestation of Christ. It cannot be otherwise. We must reckon upon this, that if we hold forth the light, we shall be hated, even amongst Christians. One does not find that lovely, but the gospel will never be lovely for those who will not receive it. All that is lovely in nature is not the offense of the cross.

If I weaken my Christianity by Judaizing, I shall be received; for man will consent to give to God, provided he also be a little glorified. But if there is nothing but the cross, man hates; whereas, the moment one recognizes ever so little of the world, we are not hated. It is needful we should count the cost, whether with the forces which we have, we can fight, or whether Satan is stronger than we are; and this will not be the case, if we keep ourselves in communion with the Father.

It is true that it is not agreeable to be hated. All that leads us to be agreeable to the world, to the customs of this world, takes away the offense of the cross, and renders us agreeable to the world, but puts us at a distance from Christ.

Chapter 129

Notes on John 20:19

“Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.” It is a great thing to say with authority, “peace,” and a great thing for the heart to feel the power of these words.

The Lord had said before, “My peace I give unto thee;” and this too is the portion of believers now; but the disciples had not peace without—witness the doors shut on account of the Jews. They thought it had been He who should have redeemed Israel; but now they were in much confusion of heart, and great fear of those without.

They still trusted in the Savior, in a sort, though He was not returned, and therefore they were in dismay as regarded their hopes, and they feared because of the Jews. God might sustain their hearts, but there was nothing to rest on as a present thing.

Now to this point the soul must be brought—to see no hope but in Christ, even though at the same time Christ may not be found.

The Spirit of grace, speaking to the sinner, convinces him of his lost condition; but the power of grace alone can give peace in the knowledge of sin forgiven.

It is to be remarked here that the disciples had leaned on Jesus as the Messiah; their thoughts had been that He should have redeemed Israel; that is, lead them on to comfort and blessing. There was this character of trust in Messiah, through whom, while with them, they lacked nothing, for He gave them power and blessing; but to the disciples at that time all this was gone. Jesus on whom they rested, to whom they looked for support and strength, was not there; and to them that knew Him not as risen, everything was gone. So we may hear of Jesus' name, and His love, and this may please and attract the mind when the Lord is working in grace; but at the same time, it is like the disciples resting on a living Savior, but with no knowledge that we are lost. Jesus may have so attracted our minds, that the world may appear to us but loss, and nothing but Jesus valuable; and we may say even as the disciples— “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life;” but this is not seeing that we are lost, or knowing the power of the resurrection.

The convincing of sin is a time of most special distress: the world gone, Jesus lost as to sense and appearance, and not found again; but it is when in this state and condition Jesus reveals Himself. And how? Saying “Peace be unto you.” And this is not simply blessing and strength to the weak; it is not supply to need that suits the lost; there must be a Savior for the lost. A man in want may go to the world for supply, and will do so undoubtedly if he be unregenerate; but if a soul feels itself lost, nothing will satisfy him till he finds a Savior.

And here the value of the cross comes in. The cross is not only the image of our lost condition, but all that belongs to us is there expressed, as borne by Another, and here the case of a sinner is met. We may have been before looking for supplies from Jesus to meet our supposed need, but

the discovery of our being lost is only met in the cross. The natural man may see it a happy thing to have his sins forgiven; but to see the power and the effect of the cross, the wrath borne, the cup drunk, to see the curse laid upon Jesus, meets the need of those who have a sense of what is due to sin. The heart that knows what it is to be lost responds to this, a new light breaks in on the soul in the perception in Jesus of what sin has done; had we to learn it in ourselves, it could only be everlasting destruction. And what is the sense of a curse passing on the head of that blessed One, if it was not for us? It does not merely draw our affections, but the knowledge that we are lost is forced upon us in the death of Jesus. What sense is there in the Son of God in the grave, if not for us? A sinless person in life and conduct, “the brightness of God's person,” and perfect as man; what relation has this to us? what bearing has it on our souls? I speak not now of grace or supply to the believer, but what meaning is there to our souls in the cross of Christ? what sense is there in the death of Christ, if you are not lost?—lost by all the evil, the sin, the vileness, the transgression that required nothing less than the blood of Christ to blot it out. If your condition is not that to which the blood alone is the answer, let it alone; but if it be, there is One on whom the judgment of God came for sin—One in whom all is accomplished for us, and there it ends. The knowledge of this by the Holy Spirit brings the complete sense of ruin, but with it the perception of being saved, for the knowledge of our being lost, when fully known in Jesus, brings with it the knowledge that we are saved; and then comes those blessed words, “Peace be unto you.” But the poor disciples, with the power of Satan round them, and Jesus gone, is the state of those who do not fully understand the power of deliverance in the cross.

The Lord said of Job, “Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him?” The candle of the Lord shone upon them; but in the character of Job, it is revealed to us that none can stand in the of the adversary. The comforts of the Lord are first of all withdrawn from Job, and then an evil disease cleaves to him; yet in this he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly; but afterward we see him entirely broken down in the presence of the adversary. He was a man whom God could point out as there being none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, yet could he not, with Satan as his adversary, stand before God; and this causes him to make himself more righteous than God, and to curse the day on which he was born. But what is the result but the opening of the lips of Job to say, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Not so Christ; He was one who stood before the adversary in the presence of the Lord. And the resurrection proved how unfailing His service was; and we learn in the sorrow and the suffering of His righteous soul, and in His death, what sin is. The Lord coming under the title of death which Satan had against us, bearing our sins. This is what the cross is. The suffering went on in the soul of Jesus when sore amazed in the garden; it went on in the soul of Jesus when He said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” In the weight of the wrath upon Him, we learn what the cross was; and if you feel that you are lost, you will know the meaning and the value of it.

It is not a crucified Savior now, but a risen One who speaks to us, the giver of all victory to us over all that was against us, having delivered us from suffering under it; and consequently the word “peace be unto you,” is the authoritative expression of one who knew the ruin, and yet could say “Peace,” because in the full knowledge that everything was done that could bring peace to the soul, for He had risen from the power of sin and death, having met the adversary to the face; and what could a risen Savior say but “peace?” Could He speak of wrath when He had borne the sin

and the curse, and He risen over it all? What could He say but this? And it is a risen Savior who does say “Peace” to those who have no peace; to those who know the meaning of the cross. What the cross showed the requirement of is finished forever, and therefore to those that believe, it is “Peace,” “Peace.”

The first person whom the Lord addresses after His resurrection is one out of whom He had cast seven devils; but grace had won her affections, she was drawn to Jesus, though looking indeed for the living among the dead, but still she was looking for Jesus; and the Mary He singled out to reveal Himself to, was the one in whom the full energy of evil had been shown out; and to her the blessed Lord spoke that one word which revealed at once to her, that He that was dead was alive again Mary—giving her a hope that was beyond destruction, because Jesus was beyond the grave. Jesus, He whom her thoughts and affections were set on, was alive for evermore; and all her hopes rested in the endless life of Him who died for her. What could be darkness to her if Jesus was alive? The darkness had been gone through, for in Jesus' death she had tasted it for a time, but He was risen for evermore, and the riches of God's grace through the power of Christ, we find was first revealed to one who had been possessed with seven devils.

And if the Lord speaks “peace” to the soul, what is the meaning of it? This gives it power that it is not a mere passing word of kindness, but peace, eternal peace, because peace is made by His having borne our sins, by virtue of what He accomplished on the cross. It is on this ground He says “peace,” and if you see that in this sense He never speaks “peace” till He is risen, you see that “being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” (Rom. 5:1-9.) Have your souls known this peace? and have you known what it is to be lost? Not merely acknowledging the need of a Savior or looking for supplies from Jesus, but knowing that what was due to you was borne by Jesus?

It presses too keenly on the heart and conscience to look at the cross unless you can say, It is peace.

The careless heart of man cannot bear to look at the cross, except he be at the foot of it, acknowledging his need of it; for he has to measure himself by the wrath poured out on Jesus. But if your back is turned on the cross, there is none to give peace. The cross may cause us shame when it leads us to see what sin is; but itself, it is the power of God unto salvation. Haste then to God who beseeches you to be reconciled. And may the Lord, in the riches of His grace, show you the vileness of sin, and that Jesus has drunk the bitter cup of wrath; that Jesus is the risen Savior; that you may enter that life of peace, through Him who, in that He died, died unto sin once, that he who lives might live unto God.

Chapter 130

Thoughts on John 3

It is of great moment that the children of God should observe the fact, that we are not only spoken to in the scriptures, according to our actual state, but addressed as standing in the various relations which the Father's counsel has purposed—or else in what the finished work of Christ has set us—or on account of which the Holy Ghost has sealed us.

The gospel of John is perhaps one of the most striking instances of this, for with what ease, and how in keeping, are we at once taken up to the heights, when “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God!” We are expected—as belonging to the new creation, as the newly begotten and new born ones—to be as much at home in the mystery of “God manifest in the flesh” and tabernacling in the midst of mankind, as we have been familiar with that far later beginning in time when “God created the heavens and the earth,” and when He “breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” Indeed we are spoken of by John as having been once born into the world “according to the flesh, and by the will of man,” much more as a point of contrast than of interest; far more as marking the state which we have left forever, than as tracing a history to which any luster attaches: in truth, to be born out of this condition—to be born of God—to be no longer confined in the circle of what is measured by time and man's defeat; but to pass out of all on the warrant that “as many as received Christ, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” This is the evangelist's new charter, and our title for passing from death unto life, from darkness unto light, and out of the whole scene of Satan's power into the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

What a redemption is ours; but what else could it be, when it is accomplished “by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot?” It is only when the conscience and soul are thus at rest with God, as to His holiness and our sins, that we can at all feel in our proper places, or be led onward to view the Lord Jesus as He was in His own essential being—the eternal Son—the coequal with God. Into whatever heights He may have descended in time, when He was found in fashion as a man, and up to whatever heights He may have been taken by resurrection, to the right hand of the Majesty on high, the Son of man in the heavens, yet this is not the path by which we are called to know “the Word” in the opening verses of this gospel. We are led to worship and adore Him where the steps which led to His incarnation are not yet in view, any more than the pathway of His present righteous exaltation by ascension glory, which has taken Him back to God.

In the stillness of these two unparalleled verses, “the Word was God,” and “the same was in the beginning with God,” there are no steps, all is equality— “the same.” Creative power, in the first chapters of Genesis, is the rising up and going forth of this Son, for “all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.” He spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast. It is not, however, as a Creator-God that this gospel occupies us (though His creative power and title are maintained), but as the Savior-God, come into this very earth He had made, when all was forfeited and ruined, to be known as “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.”

What a wreck did the first man make! But what remedies and resources will the Second man establish for God and for the sinner, so that the very God, who once commanded the light to shine out of darkness, is hourly doing a far greater thing! For He it is who “hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Redemption-work by the cross, resurrection-power from death and eternal life in the Son, are the new subjects of our evangelist. “In him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” These give out the character und dimensions of the work at the cross, by which He could bestow that life on others, and dispel the moral darkness which eclipsed Him. “This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Besides His own essential and divine glory, and what He was to be in relation to others, there is, further, what He came to reveal, and what He brought as opening out the resources of God's grace and power. As to the first of these He could say, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” What a mission is this! One which in all its parts could only be carried out and made good to us by His own sufferings and death. As to the second of these it is said, “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” And how these two ministries are interwoven, as we see the anointed One pursuing His services in successive chapters.

Another great charm of this manifestation of the Word made flesh, when looked at from our own point of view, is that John marks Him out as the “Son of God” after His birth, from the fact (additional) “Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” We shall do well to hold fast these parts of the Son's ministry as given us in this gospel, including the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

How precious is it to see, in our turn, that men upon earth find out the value of this Christ. John, looking upon Jesus as He walked, will say, “Behold the Lamb of God;” and now his two disciples will bid farewell to John and “follow Jesus.” Jesus on His part will turn Himself round to them and say, “What seek ye?” and upon the inquiry, “Where dwellest thou?” will give them a hearty welcome as He invites them to “come and see.” What new intimacies are here! what new links are being formed by this very One who was awhile ago “with God and was God,” but has now brought Himself in a human heart to sinful men, who, at His own request, come and see where He now dwells, and are at home enough with Him and in His presence, to “abide with him that day!” Oh! triumph of divine love, for He who brought “grace and truth” is with those who need it, and they will settle it to perfection m each other's company.

Yea, more, the conscious blessedness of being with Jesus in this dwelling-place of love will lead Andrew forth to find his own brother, that he may taste and see what and who this Messias is, “and he brought him to Jesus” —this new center on earth between God and His creatures—and a man too! What a reversal of all that separated itself off, and was scattered to the devil, when Adam fell! “And when Jesus saw him coming he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona thou shalt be called Cephas.” Here He begins to write upon us “the new name,” and what a name is this, which by interpretation means “a stone!” What a day of all others was this to them and to Him!

“The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.” What grace and truth are come by Jesus Christ we may well say, who see Him, whose “years are throughout all generations,” measuring Himself out to us by hours and days, and the day following; and giving Himself forth as “the Lamb of God” at one time, or “the Messias” at another; apprehended as the “Jesus of Nazareth,” the son of Joseph, by Philip; and confessed in the far different glory by Nathanael, as the Son of God, the King of Israel!

What a cluster of ripe fruit is springing up around Him, as He thus discovers Himself, and is thus acknowledged, only to be exceeded by His own assurance, “Thou shalt see greater things than these. Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” “Who is this Son of man?” they may well say in their inmost souls, as some did boldly ask, when speaking afterward of His resurrection from the dead, “what this rising out of the dead should mean.” Here too God has for Himself a “kind of firstfruits of his creatures” —each in his season, and each a proper representation of his class, and all to come out in full, when the latter-day glory shall manifest to sight these living agencies in all their activities between the heavens and the earth— “ascending and descending upon this Son of man— “the man whom God has made strong for himself.”

In passing onward into this gospel, we shall learn how Jesus will put Himself into the place of all previous types and ordinances, to fulfill them, and supersede them, as indeed we have already observed Him, taking the place of the. Paschal Lamb, as pointed out in that character by John. So He will disturb Nathanael from his reveries, under the typical fig-tree, but only to own the Antitype (as an Israelite, in whom there is no guile, must do), and bring him to the confession of the nation's faith at a yet coming day.

And now we reach the marriage at Cana, which has its own peculiar objects too; for if the beginning of the first chapter has given out the mystery, and revelation of His person, and relations, to the faith of His elect people, so will the second chapter introduce us to “this beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory.”

Here we may observe, that the glory of the first chapter has its pathway through the gospel—His personal glory, as I think (“and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"), and shines brightly in its own peculiar grace at the end. The manifestation of His glory by this beginning of miracles has also its own conspicuous line—His official glory, if we may so say, as well as its own typical meaning for the yet future day of Jehovah's millennial relations with His earthly people when “the land shall be married” and the Lord shall rejoice over Jerusalem like a young man rejoices over his bride. How truly will He in that day turn the water into wine, and how consciously will all own that the finest and the best has been kept till the last! Jesus was then in their very midst, and was doing on a smaller scale what He will do on the larger one, when they shall say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

What an opportunity this people bad of acknowledging their Messiah, as Nathanael had just done! Will they in their turn say, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel?” Here comes in, as always, the dark side of the picture; for man and the nation with its city and its temple are to be put to the test. Jesus may shine forth in His personal and in His official glory, by words and deeds; but are there eyes that can see, and hearts that can understand Him, and faith that will receive Him? “And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” He is ready

to give Himself out to the nation and to the world according to “this beginning of miracles,” and to manifest forth His glory by acts and deeds, and change all into a marriage scene, with the word “draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast,” if they will accept Him.

Is the temple made ready for His reception; or will He say “make not my Father's house a house of merchandise?” He will go up to this beloved Jerusalem, and to its magnificent temple; and present Himself in each, according to promise and prophecy; and now according to the claims and titles of His own person, and wait the issue. What an hour for them and for Him! And He “found in the temple those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting; and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out.” What strange action is this for the Lord of the temple, as His disciples remember that it was written, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” The grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ may and will characterize His ministry in the midst of men, as this gospel will fully show us; but He must visit this house, the place of Jehovah's holiness, in another character; righteousness shall go before Him on this errand, and His zeal will vindicate the offended Majesty of, and set aside this outrage on, the Holy One of Israel, by the scourge and the authoritative command, “Take these things hence.” “Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing thou doest these things?” What an answer does He give them out of the depths of that zeal which has eaten Him up, as He says, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” Care and zeal for the majesty, the holiness, and the word of Jehovah, God of Israel, will lead Him to test these builders further as they talk of “forty and six years;” and as He speaks of these “three days,” and then a rearing up, “He spake of the temple of his body;” and so will we, and join His disciples who, “when he was risen from the dead,” found the key to this temple, as they “believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had said.”

What assurances reach the soul in ways like these, and how different from “the many who believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did;” and how unlike again to these of whom it is said, “but 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.” The temple and scourge of small cords have told their own story; and now the searcher of hearts, in the exercise of His divine prerogative, will pronounce His judgment on all that man is, and not commit Himself to them.

The great center of light, the temple of Jehovah's glory, has gone out in obscurity long ago. The typical glory hovered over its threshold and then the city, till Ezekiel witnessed its departure; and now the Son of God in His day has come to the city of the great king, and to the house of prayer for all nations; but only in His turn to be grieved away, as He says, “Your house is left unto you desolate, and ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” He must needs supersede the temple and take the place of it by His body, as He had before set aside the Paschal Lamb by being announced as the Lamb of God, or as He will in the next chapter supersede the typical brazen serpent, by saying, “So must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should never perish, but have everlasting life.”

This must be our one thought as we now pursue our path more rapidly, that Jesus will step into the place of all previous types and ordinances and supersede them; and, in these new relations to God and to men, will enunciate the wondrous doctrines of grace and truth which came by Jesus

Christ in contrast with the law which was given by Moses. He will find His first scholar in this new school in a master of Israel, and reveal Himself to a man of the Pharisees in the grace of the cross; and to this ruler of the Jews in the truth of those strange lessons, taught by “the wind bloweth where it listeth,” and by being “born of the Spirit,” and yet adding, “Marvel not,” for these are the new ways, whether of seeing or entering into the kingdom of God. Nicodemus has found himself in the presence of “a teacher come from God” and will suit himself to the occasion, by inquiring as a learner, “How can these things be?” But it is not as a teacher and a scholar that the precious lessons are to be learned which Jesus came to unfold. No, they must each pass into the deeper place of a Savior and a sinner, and then settle the upbraidings of a guilty conscience and of a sin-stricken heart, by the ancient shadow of the “serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness,” giving Himself out to Nicodemus, if he can receive Him in this then mystery— “even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should never perish, but have eternal life.”

In passing on one feels constrained to say, Alas, how many are still in the place of the man of the Pharisees and in company with this master of Israel, instead of traveling on with Jesus, to learn Himself slid the cross, and prove how the side, and the hands, and the feet put to silence all the “bows” of Nicodemus, and turn to flight the doubts which gave them birth. “And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.” What a rebuke for the present hour!

This chapter tells us further of another question which arose between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. The ruler had his questions and the Jews have theirs; and may we not add that these very questionings have been stereotyped to us, whatever their difference, from that day to this? “How can these things be?” is the form in which an unbridled mind will put its difficulties or its objections; and questions about purifying the nature of man by ordinances, or by sacraments, or the value of ritualistic observances between God and the soul, are but the exercises and uncertainties of an uneasy conscience. Let us thank God when simple faith in His word takes the place of our reasonings, and when the blood of Christ at once purges and speaks unbroken peace to the conscience and to the heart of the feeblest believer. B.

Chapter 131

Jonathan and David: or, Faith and Its Difficulties: Part 1

The knowledge of God, by which any are separated off from the world which lies in the wicked one, can only be by faith in His effectual calling, the truth and power of which carry out the soul in hope of the glory which lies beyond.

This is very evident in the call of Abraham: “get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred.... to a land that I will show thee;” and the principle remains the same, however diverse the character of the calling may be. In connection with the faith which thus separates off to God is the justifying faith by which we are personally made righteous before God—we go out to Him upon His calling by grace, and He comes in to walk with us on the footing of this righteousness. Faith is the new power which enables us to measure everything by God. Are promises given to Abraham? He will not stagger through unbelief, but he “fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able to perform.” Indeed the whole character of this intercourse is blessedly summed up in the fact, “he was strong in faith, giving glory to God.”

If we quit the patriarchal age for a later one, we shall find the original principles maintained between Jehovah and His people, but with accumulated difficulties to the man of faith—arising from the failure in real testimony of what God had put into the hands of those with whom He walked. Take Samuel as an example during the priesthood of Eli, and the consequent judgment of God upon him and his two sons. Moreover the glory itself was departing from Israel, and “Ichabod” marked the anguish of the heart that felt it, and saw the ark of the Lord taken by the Philistines. If we follow history still farther, we shall find but the record of repeated failures on the part of man; though accompanied by fresh displays of God's resources in grace to His people, and in righteousness to His own name.

Complications are at the thickest, as we see the men of Ashdod carrying the ark of the Lord, and placing it in the house of their god, Dagon. True the hand of Jehovah was heavy on the Philistines, and in the morning Dagon was fallen to the ground. God's displeasure continues till the milch-kine and the new cart with the messengers deposit the ark in the house of Abinadab, and they sanctify Eleazar his son to keep it. Well may the men of Bethshemesh say, “Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God, and to whom shall he go up from us?”

How different are the lessons which the Lord teaches by this ark of the covenant! He has put terror into the hearts of His enemies, and outwardly they are plagued because of its capture; while to the Israelites it had been the bright token of Jehovah's presence, and of their blessing. In a different scene, and far later, we may recall men taking Jesus, and with wicked hands crucifying Him; and when they had done their worst, the angel of the Lord rolls away the stone from the sepulcher and makes himself master of the scene. His countenance like lightning, and His raiment white as snow, puts terror into the hearts of His enemies and “for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men;” while on the other hand, “the angel said to the women, Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.”

The patriarchs have closed their history; the priesthood of Israel has gone down in obscurity; and now, kingship is established by God in the person of Saul, and Samuel has “brought him forth to the people, and they shouted, God save the king.”

But ere passing on to consider the history of David and Jonathan in connection with the above, we would call attention to another principle in the path of faith, which is of a different nature, and only comes into operation when the former has failed to maintain a true witness for God in the walk of those who obeyed the original call to come out. Lot departed from Mesopotamia with Abraham; but the principle alluded to led Abraham to separate from the man who was attracted by the well-watered plains of Sodom Separation unto holiness and unto God guided Moses to pitch the tabernacle outside the camp of Israel—an act which Jehovah sanctioned by His own presence. How different is this from their triumphant march out of Egypt, when all their enemies lay dead upon the sea shore! And who has not marked the action of Phinehas in the matter of the whoredom at Moab, when the javelin avenged the outrage against the Holy One of Israel, and turned away His wrath? The mountains of Gilboa and David's lamentations over Saul and Jonathan are of a kindred character, and show us plainly enough that, beyond the original election, there is the further election out of the primary one, till God gets “the man after his own heart.”

How painful this second separation is—whether in the outward Israel at the time of the golden calf, or in the professing church of our times, when there is that in her midst which is far worse—is too well known by exercised souls to require any comment. When moral declension marks the progress of the individual, or the body which God has called out to be a witness of the glory that lies beyond, it is evident He would have to go along with the failure and to sanction it, unless He raised up a further testimony by the Holy Ghost, and in a corresponding power of life bestowed on those who come out on this further call of His grace to Himself. The ministry of the prophets was of this character, and embraced this object; and more especially the ministry of Christ in the double form of the Messiah or the Son (not to bring a further proof, and the last on record, from Stephen's address to the Jews in the Acts). The house which God leaves, becomes the house into which Satan enters and dwells; the temple had been turned into a den of thieves when Jesus emptied it by the scourge of small cords; and in the yet future state of the nation, the devil returns to the house from which he went out, “and the last state is worse than the first.”

The lamentations of Jeremiah over the city which sat solitary, and the loving compassion of Him who wept over Jerusalem, when He sought to gather her children “as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings,” are proof and warrant enough, to leave the outward and visible body, which maintains the name when the power is lost.

Christendom's destiny is of the same nature, and authenticated by the same call to come out, “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.” The principle is plain: Adam and Eve could only be either with God or the devil. When nationalism was established Israel formed a third power, from which they had to keep separate, because they had been taken out of the midst of all surrounding kingdoms. So now the Church, the body of Christ, called up to God, and waiting for the marriage of the Lamb, has to maintain her place on earth, “as a chaste virgin, espoused unto Christ.”

But to return, these two lines of separation unto God, in the practical power of the walk of faith, may be further observed and illustrated in the case of Saul, Jonathan, and David. When Samuel had anointed Saul as the king of Israel, the Spirit of God (true to this election) came upon Saul in the matter of Jabesh-Gilead, as he sent his threatening message throughout all the coasts, unless they came forth to the battle “after Saul, and after Samuel.” What a beginning is this identification of the prophet and the king! Victory is theirs, for God is with His anointed, and Saul can declare “there shall not a man be put to death this day for the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel.” If we pass from 1 Sam. 11-13 we shall find Saul and Jonathan together, in conflict with the Philistines, the enemies of God. Their concurrent action, in this combined effort, is beautiful, for “Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines, and Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the host, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.” And now the Philistines as the sand which is upon the sea shore for multitude come out to fight against Israel, and all the people follow Saul trembling.

Alas for Saul! the real question is not how many the Philistines may be, but will Saul tarry seven days at Gilgal for Samuel? Will the king put himself in the place of the prophet, and derange the order and ways of God, or will he tarry the full time? And Saul said, Bring hither to me a burnt-offering and peace-offerings, and he offered the burnt-offering, and Samuel came, and Saul excuses himself for his disobedience! “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams,” but Saul, guided by the seeing of the eye, forced himself out of the place of dependence into transgression.

How much of modern service finds its scope in the self-will which cannot wait for Samuel, or wait on the Lord, or the guidance of the Holy Ghost; so that the amount of unsuccessful labor is enormous in the midst of apparent bustle and untiring energy! Samuel's responsibility was to come to Gilgal at the end of seven days, “and show thee what thou shalt do.” Happy for Saul if he had fulfilled his in waiting! The whole scene has changed, for Samuel said to Saul, “thou hast done foolishly, and hast not kept the command of the Lord thy God.... and now thy kingdom shall not continue.” Sooner or later, the first man-the sons of Aaron, the prophet, and the king—each failing to keep up the character of their relation to God, is met with this question, “What is this that thou hast done?” As it was in those early records, so now—all is at an end between Jehovah and Saul.

What will Jonathan the man of faith do, now that his father is formally set aside from the throne? What can he do, but the same as any child of God must do to-day, who seeks to be guided into the steps that God is taking for the glory of His own name and the blessing of souls? If Jehovah has set aside Saul by the lips of the prophet, he can no longer be a co-worker for Jonathan, and God must be depended upon alone. Here is faith's earliest lesson of separation in practical action; and happy as it is to be found in combined service with any who fear His name, yet Jonathan does not hesitate to call the young man who bare his armor, and to pass over single-handed if needs be into renewed conflict with the enemies of God. “But he told not his father” are ominous words!

Observe, the faith that will be with God will find Him “the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” “And Jonathan said, It may be that the Lord will work for us, for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.” Here are these two men climbing on their hands and knees, and their enemies fall before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer slew after him. Everything on the right hand and on the left, in heaven and upon the earth, is made subsidiary to the full triumph of faith; for there was “trembling in the host and in the field, and the earth quaked, and there was a great

trembling.” What an answer from God to the faith that honors Him!

But where is Saul, and what keeps him apart from the work, where the power of God is so manifest? Saul is at Gibeah, and has with him Ahiah, a grandson of Eli, the Lord's priest in Shiloh, and wearing an ephod. What a question do these two positions present to the soul—Saul surrounded by what was external and ceremonial, and Jonathan outside it all, and alone with God! But who can hesitate a moment as to practical action? or who can demur to the acceptance of such a principle, for the discovery of what is right? “And Saul said to Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God;” and Jonathan, with his armor-bearer, were found wanting. Moreover, Saul had adjured the people, saying, “Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening.” But Jonathan heard not what his father had done, “wherefore he put forth the end of a rod, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes were enlightened.” What a hindrance is the outward and formal thing to the man of God who is outside it in faith! The very activities which Saul and the priest originate well nigh cost Jonathan his life, but for the intervention of the people. What could Saul or the nation do? or what can the professing church accomplish in these days, when dropped by God, but take the lead of what is around, and be content to put itself in the initiative of the nations? Israel afterward was but the standing witness of a bygone time, as it had already been in Eli's days, when Ichabod was prophetically, but really pronounced upon it. And what is Christendom now to the enlightened eye, notwithstanding all its pretensions—but Saul, and Ahiah wearing an ephod? Do we ask Where is the real power then, or now? With Jonathan and his armor-bearer, the two men who, without the sanction or knowledge of what is formally accredited, to the eyes of the nation, are doing wonders, and who have God and the resources of heaven on their side in the current of the work. So now, in spite of an ordained ministry and all that stands organized under the consecration of man's hand, or by human appointment, the word of God is not bound, nor the Holy Ghost restricted, nor the power of the name of Jesus lessened! Thousands are witnesses that the work of God, whether among His own people or sinners, has been more outside establishments and the ordered system of Saul, than as connected therewith—nay further; that in many cases the outward system, bound by its own laws (like Saul and the people), have for consistency with their oaths discredited on this account, what they could not gainsay! In this way, contempt has been poured upon a direct work of the Holy Ghost. Let such take heed and judge themselves, by seeing whether Saul or Jonathan was the hinderer to God's work in Samuel's day.

And “Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? but he answered him not that day.” Power and the presence of the Lord are no longer with Saul, though the priest and the ephod are with him; and Jonathan did but anticipate such a day when he said to his armor-bearer, “Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised.”

It will be instructive to trace the consequences of Saul's “curse upon the man that eateth any food till the evening.” In the first place, “the men of Israel were distressed, and the people flew upon the spoil and took sheep and oxen, and did eat them with the blood.” And Saul said, Ye have transgressed. And Saul built an altar unto the Lord, the same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord. What a melancholy recital are the actings of this king, who, having set himself in the place of Samuel at Gilgal, and obstructed the path of faith in Jonathan, now puts himself to be as God, and to issue a commandment, and pronounce a curse, detects transgression in others, builds an altar, and forgets that Samuel has declared him to be the transgressor against God! Do what he may in the energy of his own will, “the kingdom is taken from Saul and given to the man

that is worthier than he.”

See again the effects as regards Jonathan, who knew not the decree of his father, and had dipped his rod in an honey-comb. Saul said unto the God of Israel, Give a perfect lot; and Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people escaped; and they two cast lots, and Jonathan was taken. And Saul said, Thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. Alas for Saul's measure of right and wrong, restricted to his own command and his curse on transgression. How low that man must have fallen, whose jealousy is not for the holiness or ways of God, but reduced to mere consistency with his own rashness! Darius, and the laws of the Medes and Persians around him, led him to cast Daniel into the lions' den. Herod's birthday, and his oath to Herodias, and consistency in the presence of the captains who sat at meat with him, ended by bringing in John the Baptist's head in a charger. Need we multiply instances, either in scripture or in church history? Nay rather, let us return to our chapter, and see God's deliverance through the people. They demand of Saul, “Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid; there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.”

The time is come for the Jehovah of Israel to open a path for Himself and for the faith that follows Him, by clearing away the obstructing power of Saul, or at least by bringing in the man of His own appointment. The strength of the Philistines' enmity is headed-up in Goliath, who defies the armies of the living God; and it is into these two paths that He will introduce “the man after his own heart.” David, instructed by the Lord in secret among the sheepfolds, and measuring his prowess by the lion and the bear, is in due time the declared champion of Jehovah's hosts against the proud defier of the living God. “And David put his hand in his bag and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead and David took the head and brought it to Jerusalem.”

It may be well to note here, that no circumstances are so trying to nature, and certainly none which afford so great an occasion for the display of faith, as when we are called to accredit the man, the place, or the thing, with which God has connected Himself, and to disown as readily the house which is to be left desolate, according to His righteous decree. Jonathan when put to this test fails, though many a scene shows us that his convictions and attachments are with David, while in effect he lives with Saul, and at last falls with him. How touchingly does chapter xviii. introduce them to each other— “It came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.... and Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.” As for Saul, abandoned of God, a wicked spirit comes upon him; moreover, left to the workings of his own heart, in the midst of a scene where David was to be everything, the jealousy which is cruel springs up as he hears the women answering one another as they played, saying, “Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands, and Saul eyed David from that day and forward.” The faith of Jonathan, in the declared purpose of God, and to set aside Saul, and the knitting of his soul with David by natural affection, and by the covenant they had made, are strong enough to shelter David from the anger and jealousy of Saul; but this does not identify Jonathan with David. In chapter xix., “Saul spake to his servants that they should kill David; but Jonathan delighted much in David, and he told him, saying, My father, Saul, seeketh to kill thee; now therefore I pray thee, take heed to thyself.... and abide in a secret place and hide thyself till the morning.” Moreover, Jonathan ventures to speak

well of David, and rehearses his conquest of Goliath, “for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel; thou sawest it and didst rejoice. Wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood to slay David without a cause?” Outwardly, Saul relents, and swears as the Lord lives he shall not be slain.

But the objects of Jonathan's soul are not in the current of God's as to David, or they would have drawn him out of Saul's house. In their own range and purposes, they would have brought back David to the house of Saul, as in fact they did, and “he was in his presence, as in times past.” The amiabilities of a loving spirit naturally tend to smooth the way, and draw those together, who in the intentions of God are set in entirely different paths.” “By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.” Few dangers are like this—for Jonathan had faith, but a faith which practically brought David buck into its own circumstances, where the evil spirit from the Lord was, and came upon Saul, who bad smitten the javelin into the wall, so that David slipped away out of his presence and escaped that night.

The defective faith of Jonathan does not suit the man who is to be put in a position suited to the onward steps of God and His people: for Jonathan is not there himself, and David, by yielding to the man with whom his soul was knit, gets into greater dangers till, encountering the whole enmity of Saul's treacherous jealousy, he escapes from the entire scene. Where will the pathway of the man of faith be guided now? To the prophet that was in Israel, for David fled and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him; and he and Samuel went and dwelt at Naioth. The prophet in the outside place with God suits and strengthens the man of Jehovah's choice, till all the intervening hindrances are set aside by judgment, or triumphed over by grace. Nevertheless, David is not free from the pursuit of Saul, though he be with Samuel at Ramah, for he first sends messengers to take him, and finally goes thither himself. The Spirit of God takes possession of the sent and the sender, so that they prophesy, and Saul stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel in like manner; wherefore they say, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” God knows how to make the wrath of man to praise Him, as in this instance; or as when, in earlier days, Balaam was rebuked for his iniquity; “the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbad the madness of the prophet.”

Once more David seeks Jonathan and proposes to take his place at meat with the king, though in his fear he adds, “There is but a step between me and death.” But God graciously uses this for discipline to the heart till faith leads David out, beyond the region of fears and alarms, to walk with God in the calm security of His presence, lead where He may. If He be for us, who can be against us? The bow and the arrows, the field and the lad, are interpreted according to the arranged symbols which flesh and blood understand. And David arose out of his hiding place, “and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever. And be arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.”

Has not such a picture as this a great moral lesson for our days as well as in Samuel's time? Do we not often see—yea, have we not been put to the same proof?—by sorrow and joy, as David, who is cast out of Saul's kingdom to walk with God where He leads, till, in almighty power, David is

established on his throne at the coming day of glory?

(To be continued.)

Chapter 132

Jonathan and David: or, Faith and Its Difficulties: Part 2

In the meanwhile David “goes in peace,” as Jonathan said. But why are they parted? Did they not make a covenant with one another? Why does one go in peace, and the other go back into the city? Is there no difference in these two paths which these sworn friends take? and what is the divergence if one leads away from peace? Such questions fairly arise; and how important the answers! Let Mount Gilboa answer for Jonathan, and the lamentations of the anointed David reply likewise.

The shepherd-king, who in early life had learned his lessons by the lion and the bear, and afterward by the sling and the stone in the encounter with Goliath, is passing through the far deeper cuttings of heart and conscience which Saul's enmity had brought upon him. Witness the many psalms which give to us the experience, feelings, and faith of this sweet singer of Israel.

To return to the narrative. Where will David bend his steps now that Jonathan has left him? He is first with Ahimelech the priest, and then escapes to the cave of Adullam.

Faith in God and true heartedness led Jonathan into conflict with the Philistines, the common foe of Israel. Faith in God's purposes respecting David, and real affection too, led Jonathan to brave many a danger on his behalf with Saul; but now that David is the outcast one and hidden in the cave of Adullam, will Jonathan join him there, and own him in the day of his rejection? Alas in the record of those whose loyalty and devotedness drew them to David in the cave Jonathan's name is missing! Saul, his house, and the city pulled the other way, and were too strong. The men who gathered to David in Adullam were, it is true, a motley group; but they were gathered to the right person, and in the right place, as the issue proved. The cave gave birth to the mighty men of renown who are chronicled in 2 Sam. 23, the men of might were from thence. No matter where Jonathan was, he was not with David, and therefore was not with God.

What a searching inquiry should every Christian make, as to his own acknowledgment of the rejected Jesus, and of His rights and titles. He presented Himself to Israel and the Gentiles, and was refused and cast out. The heavens have received Him till a coming day, and God by resurrection has owned all that He was and is in this time of His rejection. He is the anointed One, the true David, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Do Christians think of this and seize the opportunity given them of owning Him now while the kingdom of Saul is running itself out? Are not the throne, the scepter, the government, and the kingdom the birthright—and now the purchased right by redemption—of Christ Jesus the Lord Or is He to be refused again (now that He is in heaven) as the only lawful holder of these dignities and glories, by the very people He came to purchase by His own blood that they might be kings and priests in the day of His glory?

The outcast David and the cave of Adullam are open to us now, or never. The soul cannot get into such an association with our Lord, except in the world which has cast Him out. Jonathan was not equal to the occasion; but what answer do we make to such an appeal? Oh! for whole-heartedness to Christ, that we may know Him and the power of His resurrection, being

made conformable unto His death.

Saul continues his hot pursuit of David, and persecutes “the man after God's own heart.” What a picture is this of one who breaks away from God, and following his own will, becomes tenfold more the child of the devil than before! Acting on the flesh himself, he makes his appeal to the flesh in others, and asks “Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields, and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds?” This appeal calls out Doeg, who impeaches the priests of Nob. “And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod.”

In chapter 23 we read that “David abode in the wilderness in strongholds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.”

“And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.” David is now in the circumstances suited to faith and to God; and this chapter shows how much he is the gainer by being cast beyond the influence, though not out of the reach, of intermediate links, which throw off the soul from entire dependence on God. David never had so much to do distinctly with God as to himself and his path; and he gets his answers directly from the Lord as to Keilah, the Philistines, and Saul. Even Jonathan must come out to David on this footing, no longer to weaken the heart by useless attempts to connect David with the house and kingdom of Saul, by bringing him back, but to strengthen his hands in the path of separation to God. Moreover Jonathan is a step in advance of himself, through the faith of David, and says to him, “Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth.” Nothing of this prophetic assurance breaks down, except that part which refers distinctly to the man who made it. Personal attachment, and covenants made and repeated, yea, the faith which can strengthen another's hand in God, and say, “Fear not,” may yet turn away from the position and the path with God, which are necessary for the accomplishment of His intentions. “And they two made a covenant before the Lord: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.” And they meet no more! Brighter scenes for David; and heavier ones for Jonathan.

God honors the faith that honors Him and can be happy where He leads. David is not only kept out of the hand of Saul, but God puts his enemy into his power. The skirt of the robes which David holds up to Saul tells how his eye spared him; and Saul is obliged to confess “Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.” The hill of Hachilah further proclaims the moral triumphs of David, as he goes thither with Abishai, who says, “God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand; let me smite him, I pray thee, even to the earth at once.” But David leaves his enemy in the hands of God, with the same confidence, as he has placed himself there. Faith refuses Abishai's wish to kill Saul, and dispenses with him as an adviser, leaving all to the sovereignty of God. A deep sleep from the Lord has fallen on Saul, and upon Abner, and the whole host: so David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster, and they got them away. Coals of fire heaped on Saul's head are David's moral weapons. He demands from Abner where the king's spear is, and where the cruse of water that was at his bolster? “Then said Saul, I have sinned: behold, I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly.”

But Saul must not only acknowledge what he has been, but, further, own what David is: “Then said he, Blessed be thou, my son: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail.” So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place. They part, and they part forever.

Saul is abandoned of the Lord: for when he inquires respecting the host of the Philistines, “the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.” Left to himself, and discovering the insufficiency of everything, to extricate him from the consequences of his sin, or to master them, what can he turn to but the witch of Endor—type of the wicked one, the beast to whom the dragon gives his power, seat, and authority? Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee. And he said, Bring me up Samuel, who says, “Wherefore dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee and is become thine enemy?” Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth and was sore afraid. David, on the contrary, encouraged himself in the Lord his God and recovers the spoil from the Amalekites and rescues his two wives, and there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters. David recovered all. Such is the difference God puts between “the man that feareth him and the man that feareth him not.” Saul forfeits all by disobedience and finally perishes; whereas David prospers in the school of adversity and comes in, at the close of this book of Samuel, possessor of place and partaker of the real power of God, by which he recovers everything from the enemy's hand. Moreover, David sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, “Behold a present for you, of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord.” Thus David brings blessing to Israel, as the fruit of the faith which owns God—an important principle too, in the Church of God, “that there should be no schism in the body,” &c.; but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: “they shall share alike.” Hence David will not allow any separate interests to exist, lest selfishness should make a footing for itself, and bring upon the people the judgment of God.

But where is Jonathan who rehearsed his fortunes in the light of David's triumphs, and said, “Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee?” Alas for Jonathan! he is one with Saul in defeat and falls as they who are slain in battle; for the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons, and the Philistines slew Jonathan. Whose heart does not go along with David in the outbreak of his grief as he utters his lamentations on Mount Gilboa? “The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Oath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.” And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son: How are the mighty fallen and the weapons of war perished! But he girds himself, in virtue of his anointing, to carry out the intentions of God to Israel, which were connected with himself. Jeremiah's lamentations over Jerusalem and the nation give place likewise to rapturous strains in his prophecy of the future prosperity of Israel, when brought under the new covenant with their Messiah, the true Son of David, in the coming day of millennial glory.

We may note, too, the peculiar searchings of heart, which the Apocalyptic lamentations to the seven churches call forth; yet John's relief is to counsel one and another, and to reveal the present resources for faith in the closing hours of its long day of difficulty. “These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David.... behold I have set before thee an open door,” &c.

The Lord give grace and confidence to the exercised in Saul's day to accept the proffered hand and listen to the voice of love: “Behold I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man

take thy crown.”

(Concluded from page 116)

Joshua 1-13

CHAP. 1 The first thought is to cross the Jordan.

Ver. 3, 4. The principles come in afterward, viz., all the extent of the promises of God; but realization by the fact that one takes possession of them. There is a connection between the moral state of man down here, and the glory of man above.

Ver. 7, 8. Herein is the strength—all my power is with thee, Joshua; but there must be obedience.

Ver. 9. Again, another principle; the starting point is that we have the authority of God to walk with Christ. Then there is energy. It is the certitude of God's will.

The “single eye” does not mean only that we have an eye, but that there is nothing in the eye to prevent our seeing.

Ver. 12-18. If the testimony is sufficiently powerful to go forward, all is in movement among God's people. Those who seek their rest without the conflict in the heavenly places must equally go to the war.

Chap. ii. 8-11. One sees here that dread seizes upon God's enemies, as soon as there is a testimony of the Spirit.

Ver. 11. One character of Rahab's faith is, that she identified herself with the people of God before their victories. The faith of Abraham was in God absolutely, whilst the faith of Rahab identified itself with the people of God.

Chap. 3 The great principles having been laid down, it is now a question of crossing the Jordan.

The Red. Sea is death in redemption (Rom. 5; Ex. 14; 15) Jordan is the application of death to the individual—spiritual death in Christ. Redemption brings into the wilderness; but when one is dead and risen (in spirit), one enters into the heavenly places (in spirit). For us, death is life. Jordan is not the sign of natural death, because afterward they meet with fighting. It is death practically, death in us spiritually.

Paul (2 Cor. 4) goes farther. He was dying for others. But, indeed, had he not been dead as to himself, he could not have suffered thus for others.

In the Epistle to the Galatians there are three things—death to the law; death to the flesh; death to the world.

Ver. 4. It is a new way. One may have religion; but when it is a question of dying, it is quite a new thing. In the flesh, a man may try to do works; but in the presence of God the flesh is destroyed. If we have passed through death, the power of Satan is annulled.

Ver. 13. Although it is only with respect to Canaan, God takes possession as “Lord of all the earth.” It is His title for the millennium.

Chap. 4 Then Joshua calls to mind the word of the Lord, and takes out of the midst of Jordan twelve stones, to put them in the place where they were to pass the night.

Ver. 9. They also set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan. There is this double effect, that having passed through death, we find in heaven the trophies of death, which is overcome, and the Lamb who was slain. Passing through death oneself, one values the death of Jesus. But one must be spiritual and heavenly for that.

To sum up, then, we have—the memorial, the trophy of Jordan, and the Jordan. Having passed over, they set up the camp in Gilgal.

Chap. v. But here we have all the Canaanites afraid. In the resurrection of Jesus, Satan was shaken to the very foundations of his empire. Then, in Christ risen, we find ourselves in Gilgal.

Ver. 2-8. There is first of all this—that the true circumcision does not take place until one is in the heavenly places. This we see every day. It is the application of the heavenly things to the flesh.

Yen 9. “This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt.” If I have got hold of the thought of the Church, and I see it worldly, it is indeed a reproach.

Ver. 10. “And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal.” One must be in heaven in order to endure the circumcision; it is not being circumcised in order to get to heaven.

Ver. 11, 12. They enjoy all their privileges before giving one single battle. The passover they celebrate in the presence of their enemies. As to the sense of it, it is somewhat more than the passover in Egypt. They have now the old corn of the land. Now we have the heavenly Christ; for as to the manna, it is Christ in the wilderness. Here it is the old corn of the land—the enjoyment of Christ in heaven; then the manna ceased. As walking through the world, we have Christ to sustain us in our weakness day by day (the manna). We also have Christ for our joy and the enjoyment of the heavenly things.

Ver. 13-15. Having given all that, now God says, You must fight.

Ver. 13. In the affairs of this life I can say of a man, even of a Christian, How much I like that man's character! but when it is a question of heaven and of warfare, I say, “Art thou for us or for our adversaries?”

Ver. 15. Again there is this warning: “Loose thy shoes from off thy feet.” I bear all the charges of thy battles; but as for thee thy business is to walk in holiness. The Lord insists upon the holiness of the camp. God in His Church will have holiness that there may be blessing, as He would have it for redemption. (Ex. 3) “Loose thy shoes.” The shoe may have contracted defilement, but it is no longer on the foot.

Chap. 6 Faith and obedience; but in the eyes of men, it is in a way which appears ridiculous that Jericho falls. The curse is pronounced on the enemies of God.

Chap. 7. Achan, by the accursed thing, defiles the whole camp. The effect of the blessing becomes for Joshua the occasion of leaving the place of dependence. He forgot to loose his shoe before the captain of the host of the Lord. He gives himself up to a vain confidence. If, in the conflict in the heavenly places, one is not with God” one only falls in a more terrible manner. It was

more serious to be beaten in Canaan than in the wilderness.

Ver. 2. It was prudent according to man to send, spies, but it is not so very good thus to go out for exploring the land.

Ver. 6-9. The heart of Joshua melts also like that of the people.

Ver. 10-12. It is not a question of talking about the Canaanites: Israel had sinned.

It is necessary to be decided, when it is a question of purifying oneself from the accursed thing.

Chap. 8. What we see here is that it is quite an affair to take this small city. In this manner of proceeding there was a double motive: first, to put an end to the discouragement; secondly, to make all the people feel what the question was.

Ver. 18. Nevertheless, when the accursed thing is removed, and though the whole army is there, Joshua (the Spirit of Christ) stretches out his spear, and the ambush (which could not see it) enter into the city. It was the proof that God was still with them that they had more trouble; but at the same time the principle was recovered—the presence of God. It is beautiful to see how the faults committed at Ai and at Jericho were entirely repaired by the goodness of the Lord.

Ver. 30-35. Although the land is not altogether conquered, Joshua treats it as being the land of Jehovah. Read Deut. 21 - xxiii. Having once entered into the real position, we may consider everything as ours. Joshua shows this in two ways. First, he commands the dead body to be taken down (ver. 29): otherwise the land would have been defiled, and that could not suit the inheritance of Jehovah. Secondly, having taken possession, Joshua builds an altar, and owns all the consequences in blessings and curses. It was placing the enjoyment of the law under the responsibility of the people to obey Jehovah.

The altar was on mount Ebal. The meaning of it is in truth this: thou shalt worship if thou canst, for the sign of relationship was connected with responsibility.

In Deuteronomy one sees the thing in its details.

Chap. 26. The people acknowledge that the land was given in grace. They offer to Jehovah. It was the proper state of a Jew.

Chap. 27. is another principle—the complete curse resulting from their having taken this inheritance on the ground of the law. From Gerizim there is no blessing pronounced.

Chap. 28. is the blessings and the curses with respect to God's government. We have the things as facts in the history of Israel.

Chap. 29. is only saying that, according to these words, God had made a covenant with Israel.

Chap. 30. The consequence is indeed set forth; but then God adds, If thou shalt obey and return unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, after all these things have come upon thee, I will bring thee back. This is the secret thing. (Deut. 29:29.) When they were driven out of Canaan they could not attain to righteousness by the law.

Josh. 9 The effect of this victory and of these blessings is to stir up the rest of the Canaanites against them. Here they are now leagued together. Here again there is a snare: namely, that when one has resisted a confederacy, one is tempted to form also a confederacy. This is in one sense the place which the Gibeonites took here. As Joshua had been deceived by the sin, he is so now by their artifice, and in a rather gross way. It was a question of being an Israelite and nothing but an Israelite. The Gibeonites only bring fresh attacks upon Joshua and upon Israel.

The camp was always in Gilgal.

Ver. 14. The men of Israel judged, alas! by their provisions: “The men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.” (See ver. 6, 7.)

Chap. 10 Joshua goes up from Gilgal and comes back to Gilgal. This is an important thing to notice.

Chap. 11. Here we have another principle. Hazor was the capital; and it is the only city that Joshua burns. That which is the seat of strength and energy according to the world cannot become the center of power according to the Spirit.

Chap. 12. In one sense Joshua had conquered all: but when it is a question of taking possession, there is scarcely anything. In the time of Paul the Church had before its eyes all the promises; then, when Paul is dead, one again sees Canaanites appearing.

Chap. 13. Finally, Joshua only put two tribes and a half in possession. Something similar has taken place with respect to the Church.

Joshua 5

We must remember that all these things which are written “happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.” This expression, “ends of the world,” has its importance as also this, “once in the end of the world,” &c. (Heb. 9:26.) It is what we are in as Christians, consequent on the end of all the dealings and ways of God with man as to teaching or testing him. Now man as, man has been fully tried, and God has set up another man. He is more than man too, but still another man, and it is in grace too, surely, for sinners, that we may find better paradise than that which has been lost. The Lord Jesus Christ could say, when He came to the end, “now is the judgment of this world.” We find man tried in every way from innocence to the cross of Christ, and the Son Himself is cast out of the vineyard and slain. John the Baptist came after the law and the prophets and preached repentance (Matt. 11), but they would not repent. When he mourned, they did not lament; and when the Lord came and piped, they would not dance, In that same chapter He says “Come unto me.” Now man must come to Christ as rained, according to His own invitation.

Man may be decently alienated from God, or indecently, but it is all the same. “The carnal mind is enmity.” We must come to the Second man, to Christ. God did not set up the Second, whilst He could recognize the first. He cannot own both; and to acknowledge man in the flesh now is to set aside the fact that God has set up another. What I would now set forth is the full deliverance we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. I need not say this is not deliverance as to our body, but blessed liberty of spirit while we are waiting for the deliverance of body. We are not only forgiven, but are brought into liberty of association with God in holiness.

This deliverance is shadowed in Israel's history by figures, Egypt, the wilderness, Jordan, Canaan. We are all aware that the general idea is that Jordan means death and Canaan heaven. But directly we enter Canaan, we get conflict. This is not the heavenly places as a place of rest evidently. That which characterizes Canaan is conflict, and we get a figure of what we find brought out in Eph. 6—the wrestling, not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, for which we need to have on the whole armor of God. But if we are to have conflict there, we must first be there. What I would speak of this evening then is the way we get into the heavenly places. Remember Christ is there. We find in the history of Israel the way a soul progresses to the heavenly places. It is when they get into Canaan, and not in the wilderness, that the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. They kept the passover as circumcised, they ate the old corn of the land, and the manna ceased.

And this is the way the soul gets into deliverance “from this present evil world,” and is introduced into the heavenly places. They were slaves in Egypt, making bricks without straw; but God comes down to deliver them, and He talks only of Canaan and not of the wilderness. But first He appears in the character of a judge. He must pass them through the judgment. They were as great sinners as the Egyptians (perhaps greater, for they had a greater knowledge of God), but still, wherever the blood was, there was shelter—perfect security. It was only because the blood was on their

houses that God passed over. It was not a question of communion, but the blood keeping God out as a judge.

So with the believer now. It is a blessed fact that, wherever the blood is relied on, God cannot see a single sin. God would have to deny the efficacy of that blood if He did net pass over. What screened them was not their seeing the blood but God seeing it. Many souls are saying, I do not know whether I have accepted it aright. But what gives peace is knowing that God has accepted it. They think they must look into their hearts to see if they have accepted it aright: but a simple soul would not think of such a thing, but would only be too happy to rest in God's value of Christ's blood. There may be many a work to give right affections. It is quite true that we ought to find the blood each day more precious, but that is not questioning my acceptance. It is a question of growing affections; but what gives peace is not growing affections, but the fact that God has accepted the blood, and He must deny the efficacy of the blood of Christ if He did not receive me. The effect of it was to arrest His hand in judgment. Not only has my sin been pardoned, but God has been glorified at the cross of Christ. That gives full value to the blood.

If God judged sin only, then He is righteous, but there is no love. If He had said of men, “They are poor wretched things and cannot help it, so I will pardon all,” there might be love shown, but there would be no righteousness. It would not be holy love. But when we come to the cross, we have perfect righteousness, and perfect love. God's truth and majesty are fully brought out there, because He, the “captain of our salvation,” was there made “perfect through suffering.” He has suffered and now the Son of man is glorified and God is glorified in Him. He has run the race and is now set down at the right hand of God.

“God hath highly exalted him.” In virtue of the cross man is glorified. Stephen sees the Son of man in heaven: that is the wonderful thing. Stephen did not say “I see the glory:” this was natural in heaven; but “I see the Son of man at the right hand of God” in the heavens—man in heaven. He is there not only as Son of God, but as man. He gets His place in the glory of God. We get this wonderful truth because He has finished the work God gave Him to do. None but He could sit there. God has been glorified by what man has wrought. He was divine of course, or He could not have done it. This becomes the basis of everything—man having a place in the glory of God, not at His right hand—that is the place of pre-eminence for Christ alone. Now that He is there, He has sent down the Holy Ghost to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. Of righteousness both to the believer and to the unbeliever: to the unbeliever because he rejects Christ; to the believer because he is associated with Him. He convinces the world, not as individuals, but all in a lump. When the world cast out Christ, the Father says, “I will have Him” and now He is set down as the result of His finished work. He receives it now from His Father as man. The angels desire to look into this. All God's moral attributes have been glorified in man in the person of Christ. It is the foundation not only of the putting away our sin, but of the glory of God in righteousness and truth.

When we have passed through the veil and entered within the holiest in the consciousness of our souls, what value do we not see in the blood! And now we apprehend what the cross is! Now I contemplate the cross for the affections of my soul. I meditate and think of the cross, then I get growth. When we are at home with God, there can be growth. It is not there I find peace. For peace is had by learning that righteousness has accepted the blood which love gave. Now love

gives it to me, but righteousness is exalted in giving it. Israel go to the Red Sea, and here they are brought to a standstill. They found they were hemmed in on every side, and now they are “sore afraid.” So often when a person is delivered from judgment in one sense, he meets somehow with death and finds Satan pursuing. Many a soul gets peace and comfort whilst looking at the cross, but is afraid when it thinks of judgment. “I am a poor sinner delighting in the cross: it just suits me.” Does judgment suit you? When they came to the Red Sea, it was as not judgment, but God a positive Deliverer. They had known God as a Judge in Egypt, and the blood had screened them. Now they learn Him at the Red Sea as a Deliverer. They never see the “salvation of God” till they get to the Red Sea, and they pass out of Egypt. They are not only sheltered from judgment but brought into a new place.

The blood screens us from judgment on account of our sins, and by that same cross and resurrection we are brought to God. Christ dead and risen is what we have in Romans; and the result is we are brought to God as our Father. Death and resurrection take me clean out of the place I was in. If I say “I am a guilty sinner,” He says “You are justified.” If I say “defiled,” He says You are cleansed. If I have offended, then I am forgiven. He has met every question that could perplex the soul.

The new place of man is as perfectly redeemed and brought to God. Not only are his sins put away, but he is delivered, brought out into the wilderness. When God speaks of deliverance, He does not say a word of the wilderness. I am brought out into a new place altogether, not yet the heavenly places, but I have “redemption through his blood.” So we find two conditions of the Israelites—in the wilderness, and in Canaan. And there are two distinct parts in the life of a Christian. First, what we find in Hebrews and Galatians, the place of deliverance from the present evil world (Gal. 1:4), that is the wilderness; and, secondly, I am in Canaan, the heavenly places, as shown in Ephesians and Colossians. The wilderness is what the world is to the Christian. What has a dead and risen man to do with the world 2 Now death and judgment are behind me, but I have not left conflict behind.

The blessed Lord went into death, and bore the judgment. If I am associated with Him, it is all behind Him. If I have a part in Christ, I have a part in the deliverance. (See Psa. 22) As soon as “heard from the horns of the unicorn,” He says, “I will declare,” &c. The first thing the Lord does in resurrection is to declare the Father's name to His brethren. He brings them out into the same place He is in. In John 20, He says to Mary Magdalene, “Go to my brethren;” and then He leads their praises as the firstborn of many brethren: “In the midst of the church will I praise thee.” He brings them to His God and their God, His Father and their Father. He had been all alone in His suffering and wrath. Now all is settled, and now He says, “In the midst of the congregation.” He associates us with the praises— “Not ashamed to call them brethren.” He never said “My brethren,” nor “peace,” until after He was risen. He had said, “Fear not,” and anticipatively He had said, “My peace I give unto you;” i.e., you shall have it. But peace was not then made, and it is not till Tie has made peace by the blood of His cross that He comes and “preaches peace to them that are afar off and to them that are nigh.” He passed into the new place as man and says, Now you are here with me. Now we are associated with Christ, as Israel sings, “Thou hast led forth thy people which thou hast redeemed; thou hast guided them in thy strength into thy holy habitation.” We have the promise of glory too: “Thou shalt bring them in.” (Ex. 15:13-17.)

The wilderness is the path of a Christian in which he learns himself. It is the place of a soul who is really at rest before God. There may have been experience before of slavery, &c.; but they were the experiences of a soul in which God has acted, but is not yet delivered. It is where a soul is who knows he is redeemed, If I only know the blood, I am still in Egypt; but if I have passed through the Red Sea, I know God as a Deliverer; I am not in the flesh but in the Spirit. (Rom. 8) The prodigal son had experiences before he returned home, but they were the experiences of one who had not yet met the father. There was a work in the man. He found he was perishing. He had repented and set out; but there still remained the question, What will he say to me when I meet him? Will he set me on his right hand or left? He had his speech all ready made up and had fixed the place he was to take in the house, that of a servant, but he had not yet met the father. He learns what his place was in the house by what the father was to him when he met him, and he says nothing about the place of a servant. He is brought in as a son. He did not, could not, say, “Make me as one of thy hired servants,” for his father was on his neck. It was not what he was for God, but what God was for him. He puts the best robe on him, not a robe. He met him in his sins, but does not bring him in in his sins. God met him in rags, but he is brought in in Christ.

If I have got through the Red Sea, He is a deliverer and not a judge in virtue of the full blessed work of Christ. I am not in the flesh. It is not merely that your sins are forgiven, but you are in the Second man, in Christ, before God. The first practical effect is, I am brought into the wilderness. A person has a great deal to learn after he is redeemed. I am out of the flesh and have my place in and with Christ; but the learning of the flesh in me is a humbling process. “And thou shalt remember all the way the Lord thy God led thee these forty years to humble thee, to prove thee,” &c. “Thy raiment waxed not old, neither did thy foot swell these forty years.” (Deut. 8) God was thinking about their very clothes and their feet, but He gave them all the discipline and correction needed to show them themselves. And when through their unbelief they refuse to enter the land of Canaan, being unwilling to go up and fight the Amorites, He in His grace turns round in unfailing love and patience and dwells with them all the forty years of their wilderness journeyings.

What characterizes the Christian is the presence of the Holy Ghost, God dwelling in him in virtue of redemption. He does not dwell in innocence; He never dwelt in Eden. The dwelling of God with man was always consequent on redemption, whether in the cloud with Israel or in the Church by the Holy Ghost. He had walked with Adam in the garden, dined with Abraham, so to speak, but He never dwelt with them. But directly He gets a people redeemed, He dwells with them and talks of holiness. He adapts Himself to their circumstances. When they were in bondage in Egypt, He comes to them as deliverer; when they are in the wilderness dwelling in tents, He pitches His tent amongst them and leads them through. When they arrive at Canaan, He meets them sword in hand as their captain to lead them in conflict; and when at length they are all settled down, He builds a beautiful house and dwells in their midst. So with His people now. He dwells with us by the Holy Ghost: first in them as individuals (Know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost); secondly, in the Church collectively (“In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit"). It is not merely they are born of God, but they have the blood on them, and there the Holy Ghost dwells. “After ye have believed,” &c. “He spake of the Spirit which they that believed on him should receive.” “He that stablisheth us is God.” He quickens unbelievers and dwells in believers. The presence of the Holy Ghost is what forms the distinctive character of the Christian and of the Church. The leper was washed, sprinkled, and anointed—the

blood placed upon his ear, his hand, and his foot; and then the oil upon the blood. It was most holy: nothing must pass into the ear, or be done by the hand that would defile, neither must they do anything that would defile the feet in walk. The anointing—that is, the presence of the Holy Spirit in us—is the seal of the value of the blood. “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.” (Rom. 6) The Holy Spirit is the earnest, not of the love of God (for we have this), but of the inheritance for which we wait.

In the wilderness God is humbling, proving us, and making all work together for good. Circumcision is not practicable in the wilderness. Israel come to Jordan and cross it. Here we have a figure, not of Christ dying for me, but of my dying and rising with Him. It is not simply that Christ died for us, but I am crucified with Christ. I reckon myself dead and have received Christ as my life. I am dead, risen, and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. I am gone out of the wilderness altogether. We were dead down there in sins, and Christ came down and died for sins; and now we are quickened, raised up, and seated in Christ. That is the new place altogether. This is the doctrine taught in Ephesians. I am no longer looked at as alive in the flesh at all. I have got into heavenly places. And the moment I have got there, all is mine— “All spiritual blessings in the heavenly places;” but then it is only as I set my foot on my blessing, that I make it practically my own. And then I find that there is another foot there: the enemy is in possession; so that I have need of the whole armor of God. The place we have to pass through is the world as a wilderness; but, as to my position, I am in the heavenly places, and I must walk accordingly. If I am living in the world as a man in the flesh, I meet my neighbors and I may find them kind and obliging; but directly I begin to talk of heavenly things, I find them opposed.

Well, I have got to show forth Christ in living relationships. If it is true that I am in Christ, it is true also that Christ is in me. “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” The standard is not a man running on towards heaven, but it is showing out the Christ that is in me. “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body” —that and nothing else. “Death worketh in us, life in you.” I hold that Paul is dead. It was Christ acting through Paul. If we fail, that is wilderness work. If Christ is in me, I must never let a bit of anything but Christ be seen. Now you have Christ in you, which is positive power and nothing else. Now YOU SEE that that is seen and nothing else. Joshua says, “Set your foot on.” It is yours. I have got into Canaan and I get conflict directly. I am sitting in heavenly places in Christ. It is all mine, and now I am seeking to get hold of the things that I have a right to. “As captain of the Lord's host am I now come.” We get testing in the wilderness, conflict in Canaan. When I am in Canaan, I have spiritual intelligence and activity in that which belongs to me. “Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ” —how much have we each realized of the spiritual blessings which are ours?

In the stones taken out of Jordan we find that the believer takes with him the character of death. The ark went down. We died to sin. The world and Satan's power is all gone. We belonged to death once: now death belongs to us. Now I am bound to say, “Reckon yourself dead.” We are never told to die to sin, but that we “are dead.” The first thing is, we have passed through Jordan dry, and that is our title to reckon ourselves dead. Circumcision is the practical application of this. “Mortify therefore your members which are on the earth,” &c. (Col. 3) If I see a man impatient, I do not deny he is dead, but I say you want a little of Gilgal. If I see a man looking at nonsense in the town, I say, I do not deny you are dead, but you want to be circumcised. That is the practical

application of the death of Christ to our souls, actually realizing it. Most strikingly, in Joshua we get Ai taken, then conquest after conquest; but we find Gilgal, the place of circumcision, was always the place to which the camp returned after their victories. No matter what success you have, you must go back to Gilgal. The Book of Joshua is the history of successful energy; the Book of Judges, of failure, with God coming in and removing it from time to time.

Gilgal, the place of self-judgment, is the place of practical divine power. We find even victories dangerous unless we return to the judgment of the flesh. After preaching the gospel, the most blessed work that can be, we must go back to Gilgal. Israel began well at Jericho: what were the high walls to faith? The higher the walls, the more the tumble when they come down. But instead of returning to Gilgal, they get self-confident and send up a few to take Ai. But there we get failure. They have to return to Gilgal and judge the flesh. In Judges, the angel of the Lord goes up from Gilgal to meet them at Bochim, that is, from the place of power to the place of tears. They had left the place of power for the place of sorrow. They sacrifice there, but it is in tears.

After the passage of the Jordan, the first thing we saw was the setting up of the twelve stones; secondly, circumcision; and then, thirdly, we get the passover. They can now look back at the foundation of everything in redemption. They keep it now, not as guilty and protected by it—that they had been in Egypt; but as celebrating the truth that the death of the blessed Son of God is the foundation of all blessing. The Lord's Supper is nothing less than celebrating that which is the foundation of God's giving of everything. The more we look at it we find the cross holding a place that nothing else has, except Him who died on it. “As is the heavenly,” &c. “As he is, so are we,” &c. The cross is even a deeper thing than the glory. The glory has been obtained by it, but the cross is where the moral nature of God, His holiness and His love, have been glorified. Here we see the circumcised believer in Canaan feeding upon the lamb, the remembrance of the death of Christ. The fourth thing seen is that they feed on the “old corn of the land,” and the manna ceases. The old corn is a type of the heavenly Christ. The manna suited the wilderness—Christ come down from heaven. In the midst of all the circumstances down here He meets us on the journey and we feed upon Him. It is the same Christ—only in another character—that we see in the old corn of the land. We have a humbled and a glorified Christ for the food of our souls: not only His life down here, but what we find in 2 Cor. 3, “We all with open (unveiled) face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.” It is the fruit of the land—a humbled Christ who is now in the Canaan to which we belong. They had not yet taken a city, but they sit down at the table which God has spread for them in the presence of their enemies. All is mine before a single victory. I sit down in the presence of my enemies. He has spread a table for me. God's delight is my delight. Before I draw my sword in conflict, I sit down and know that everything is mine.

Lastly, we have the man with the drawn sword come to take his place as Captain of the Lord's host. In heavenly things it is all conflict. Mark the word here. It is a question of “Art thou for us or for our adversaries?” There is no middle place; but a complete split. If you are for the world, you are against Christ. The moment it becomes a question of Christ, it must be either for or against. The world has crucified Christ, and He has said, “He that is not for me is against me;” and “He that is not against me is on our part.” I know that the meaning of these two statements has been questioned, and thought difficult to reconcile, but it is very simple. If we are for Christ, we must be against the world; and if we are not against Him, the opposition of the world to Him is so strong

that it will not have us. “Light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light,” and there can be no uniting of the two. You never see the world accept faithfulness to Christ. The human heart is enmity to Christ. Satan's great object is to get Christians to suit their Christianity to the world. You will never get the world to take God as its portion. “As captain of the Lord's host am I come.” Of course, it was the Lord Himself. We have the same words here as at the burning bush to Moses, “Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy.” In the spiritual conflict we have to carry on, holiness is as much a question as redemption; and when we come to have conflict, we must be as holy as we shall be when we are with Him. Thank God, redemption has done this. You will have the Lord with you. The One who carries on the warfare is the Holy One who has redeemed us, and the Lord's own strength is with us. How far have we the testimony? Can we say, “I am dead, and my life is hid with Christ in God?”

Is your thought and purpose to be at Gilgal or at Bochim? Is it your thought to go on in the knowledge of perfect redemption? to have everything of the flesh judged? and to have the Lord's strength with you for successful conflict?

“Prove all things.” By what standard? My own comprehension, or God's revealed word? “Hold fast that which is good.”

Jude

The point in the Epistle of Jude is departure from original standing, and contains strong warning to us in the last days. It is not the same as 2 Peter, where you get the angels judged for having sinned. In Jude it is apostasy: “They kept not their first estate.” In 1 Peter we get the judgment of God's people (the house of chap, iv). It is the government of God exercised towards His people. In 2 Peter it is His government exercised against wickedness. The general character of apostasy is Cain, of ecclesiastical error, Balsam, of gainsaying, Korah. The mention of these things is meant to be a warning, and an admonition— “crept in” practically denying the grace of God. He warns against such. (Ver. 2.) Why is mercy introduced here? Because they needed the mercy, they were no longer addressed as the Church, but as individuals. In all the closing writings of the New Testament the Church is looked at as a thing judged (that is, the professing thing on earth). God is judging it as contrary to His mind. If God's judgment is on the Church, I cannot look to it for judgment: its judgment is worth nothing to me.

“Sanctified, preserved, called.” (Ver. 1.) Sanctification is the result of the accomplished will of God. “By the which will we are sanctified” (Heb. 10), accomplished thing. You do not get the operations of the Spirit in Hebrews. In Heb. 10 it is looking rather at the efficacy of the offering of Jesus Christ of which sanctification is the result. Here in Jude it is more individual, “by the Father.” “Sanctified by God the Father.” The sanctification goes rather farther than in Hebrews. Relationship comes in here, as “the Father.” In John 17:17, “Sanctify them through thy truth;” there it is the way in which it is wrought. He was going to write to them about the common salvation, but was obliged to write on this particular subject, because they were in danger. We have lost what he was going to write, but we have gained what he did write by the guidance of the Spirit. If the first estate is not kept, there may be long patience, but there is no remedy. And when God comes in to judge, He always goes back to the first departure from the original standing. Thus Stephen, when speaking of the departure and sin of Israel, goes back to the golden calf, their first departure. (Acts 7) We must go back to the original to judge the present state. “I planted wholly a right seed.” Verse 4 shows the character it suited the enemy to take at a particular time. Those who had “crept in unawares” are those on whom the Lord will execute judgment when Ile comes. Enoch prophesied of these. (Verse. 14, 15.) The same set of people who in the apostle's day were coming in the Lord will judge.

They deny the only Lord (despotes). The same word is used in 2 Peter 2:1, “denying the Lord that bought them.” He bought the world, just as Joseph bought up all the land of Egypt and the persons too for Pharaoh—like a slave bought. I will not know you apart from your master. It has nothing to do with redemption. It is His claim over them, but these “crept in unawares,” refuse to admit His claim.

How “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered?” This would be rather defending the faith which we have than attacking that which is false. If I see the mischief coming in, I stand out against it, setting my face as a flint. There is no good in your raising the devil if you cannot lay him. There

is no use in your meddling with evil if you are not called of God to do so.

“Once delivered,” that is, I must go back to the beginning, to the original faith as it was delivered. In these days it is all-important to inquire what was from the beginning. You have certainly got what is in the Now Testament, what was in the beginning. If I abide in that, I abide in the Father and in the Son. (1 John 2:24.) Verse 14, Enoch's prophecy. The first testimony of God. Here we find that God had from His first testimony contemplated the apostasy of the Church. Just as in Deut. 32 at the commencement of Israel's history, He foretells what the end would be. At the starting point the apostasy was thought of. It strengthens faith to see this. I am not surprised at any evil that may come in. I am not looking at what He has put out of His hand, but at that which is in His heart. The tendency of the path all around was to shake faith. “Will ye also go away?” A person never sees beyond what he is. May not a person have light beyond his position? He cannot judge beyond the moral state he is in. A person may have light as to mere knowledge, but not as to their judgment of things around.

There is responsibility as to being clean in your walk. “Contend,” agonize for it. It may be in stating the truth—not only to teach but to convince gainsayers. (Ver. 11.) In Cain we get the first principles of apostasy, natural religion and evil, the world and hatred to that which is true. In Balaam we get religion for gain, selling his services for reward, and fornication (seducing God's people), and idols. In Korah we get open rebellion, the full apostasy, the denial of Christ in His titles as priest and king. Cain is the man in whose family the world was set up with a natural false worship. The Balaam and Borah forms of evil are going on both together. “Science and religion are twin sisters in the cradle.” With Cain it was the utter blindness toward God. What answers to the gainsaying of Korah now? It is open infidelity such as we find in Colenso and the “Essays and Reviews.” The error of Balaam for reward. Balaam's was religious seduction, taking the name of the Lord, and the real inspiration comes from the devil. “Stand here while I meet (the Lord) yonder.” The words, “the Lord,” are introduced by the translators. He was really going to seek enchantments, as we learn from Num. 24:1. Here we get Puseyism. He was professing to get his inspiration from the Lord, whilst really inspired by the devil.

What is the difference between Jezebel and Balaam?

In Balaam we get him selling what he really received from God to the devil for reward. Jezebel is the principle of national religion. Jezebel had no business with Israel at all. It is the Jezebel character of evil rather than that of Balaam now. “For reward” is the point here. We get the other in Pergamos. (Rev. 2) He had a certain and remarkable knowledge of Jehovah, but could not do what he liked—an awfully wicked man—with the love of reward, power, and gifts. “Feast with you, feeding themselves,” &c. They like the credit of being with God's children. Those who had crept in were feasting themselves at their feasts of charity, like those against whom the apostle warns the Philippians, “whose god is their belly.” Another thing which characterizes them was the absence of all conscience, “feeding themselves without fear.” Compare Ezek. 28, the prince of Tire. Conscience is always awake when we have to do with God. It may be sometimes reproved, but is always awake.

Verse 19. Without God's Spirit. “These be they who separate themselves.” They are like the Pharisees. “Stand by thyself. Come not near me, for I am holier than thou.” (Isa. 45:5.) The word Pharisee means “separate.” Here they are those who had crept in. In 1 John 2 the antichrists are

distinguished by having gone out. Verse 20. That which characterizes the faith amidst all the evil is that it is a “most holy faith.” “Praying in the Holy Ghost.” The great difference between those who were really saints and those who had crept in was having the Spirit; the others are. described as “sensual, having not the Spirit.” The presence of the Holy Ghost in the saints is what characterizes the Christian state and the Christian Church in this dispensation. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.” “He that is spiritual discerneth all things.” We do not make half enough of the fact that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost. No Spirit, no life; no Spirit, no spiritual understanding. Prayer is not only dependence, but expressed dependence, absolute confidence too. “In everything by prayer let your requests be made known unto God.” It may be perhaps foolish requests. It is the emptying out of the heart to God. It does not say that you will receive all your request, but that “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” It is another thing to go and talk with Him about His interests. There is another thing needed—absolute confidence in God, asking in the name, being in the current. If the words dwell in us, we shall ask aright. Moses says to God, “You brought out. What will you do for your great name?” Until the Lord Jesus comes, the state will be evil. The last bit of the hill is the steepest; but climb, never mind, and “as thy day so shall thy strength be.” The days in which we live are perilous times, but the Lord is just as sufficient for perilous times as any other time. The power of the Spirit is always accompanied by a sense of weakness and difficulty, and therefore the need of mercy. “Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” It is here the mercy needed along all the path, mercy reaching to the end and carrying us into everlasting life. It is not the same as Phil. 3—looking for the Savior, that is, actual deliverance. Peter speaks of the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. “Building up yourselves” is individual here. It is not building the Church but individuals. “Keep yourselves in the love of God” practically. It is one thing to know the love of God as a general truth” God so loved the world;” but it is another thing to know myself as the special object of it. It is knowing myself as the special object of. it that I get here. We get the two things in Eph. 1:4, 5. In verse 4 it is the general truth that we should be “holy and without blame before him in love.” In verse 5 the special thing is, “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself.” We get the same thing of the love of Christ. He “loved me and gave himself for me.” Verses 22, 23. It is a man who will not let an evil in to hinder the enjoyment of divine love. When a man is ensnared, “have compassion;” but if he goes on recklessly, without conscience, have “fear.” Verse 24. There is a power able to keep the saints above circumstances. The epistle begins with “sanctified by God the Father,” and ends with the purpose carried out by the only “God our Savior.” “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only (wise) God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” “Faultless” as to our walk, our life. he is able to keep one. “Exceeding joy?” Yes. We ought not to lose sight of that, that there is a power efficient to keep us from filling. We are apt to get into the seventh chapter of Romans as a practical state. There is an evil nature and it will out. “That ye may not do,” &c. The Spirit hinders you from living after the flesh. Verse 23. “Saving” saints. Ha sees the saints in conflict, but above the circumstances. A saint above circumstances knows how to abound and to be hungry. We do not realize sufficiently that the power is there to keep us from falling—in all things more than conquerors, that is, over circumstances.

It is a great thing to have the inward consciousness of the love of God, that I walk in the perfect consciousness that God loves me. “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved,” &c. It is power as regards my walk, that I have the present and immediate consciousness that God loves me. I get a double character of His love—His nature. And all that He does flows from love. But it is another thing to be the personal object of His love. “He loved us and washed us.” “Loved me and gave himself for me.” God's love was manifested, and that in His general character. He might have had servants, but that would not satisfy Him.

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Chapter 137

A Kinsman's Duty

There is a difference between getting into the light and into the spirit of the word.

Much depends on the mode of dealing with it. If I make it my study, taking either a subject in it or a portion of it, and deal with such carefully and laboriously, I shall get into the light of it. If I make it my meditation, not so much handling a given portion of it, but in a freer style letting the soul be borne onward by it, I shall get into the spirit of it.

Of course, I speak of secondary influences, remembering the place of the unction or the Holy Ghost.

Our perfection as disciples would be both to dwell in its light and breathe its spirit, to bear away in our hearts both the one and the other. But the disciple in whom the spirit of the word prevails will be a happier disciple himself, and generally more grateful to others, than he in whom the light of it is principal.

Peter invites us to that word which ministers such light or knowledge as prophets searched into and angels desired. But he tells us how to pursue this high and blessed study—by laying aside moral evils—as having tasted the grace of Christ—as having fellowship with the disallowed stone—as exercising ourselves in worship of a high order. (1 Peter 1:12; 2:1-10.)

This, however, only as it enters my heart. My present writing for a little is on a kinsman's duties. The Son of God became our kinsman: “Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise himself took part of the same.” But having become our kinsman, the duties of such an one lay upon Him, and He abundantly owned them and met them. He has answered, or will, in their dispensational season, answer the claims of His needy, injured, or harmless brethren. (See Lev. 25; Num. 35; Deut. 25) But it is this which is on my mind at present in connection with this—that we ourselves have entered upon new relationships, and consequently on new duties. We have, by new birth, assumed another reason or nature, and also a new family connection or kindred.

Thus we have put off “the old man,” and are therefore, as the apostle says, “no longer debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh;” no longer debtors to the claims of the old man. But we have put on the “new man;” and in the power of this thought the apostle, at times, directs his words at us. (Rom. 8:12; Eph. 4:24, 25; Col. 3:9-12.)

Just as the Son of God took a foreign nature, a body that was new to Him, and ever since has nourished and cherished it, even the Church, as a man would love himself (Eph. 5:29); so have we and are under like obligations. We have put on the “new man,” and have become debtors to nourish and cherish it, to live “after the Spirit,” according to that which is created in righteousness and true holiness.

But, further, this putting on of the new man has made all the saints our kindred, and we have to own their claims as such.

The law did not say that, if such claims had not been answered, there must be death or stoning; but deep reproach and perpetual shame were to lie on the Jewish brother in some such case. See this in the ordinance of marrying a brother's widow. If the brother refused to perform this duty and raise up the name of his deceased and childless brother, upon the inheritance and among the families of the land, the widow was to come and pluck his shoe from his foot, and spit in his face, and his house thenceforward was to be called “the house of him that hath his shoe loosed.” He was not to be stoned, but to have a mark put upon him, and to be made a kind of pillar of salt.

So with us. The Holy Ghost in the New Testament may not write a sentence of death against a saint who is indifferent to the duties of brotherhood, or the claims of his new kindred in Christ; but, as under the law, He puts reproach on him. “Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” The spitting in the face was a vivid mark of the dictate of the divine mind towards the Jew who so refused the claims of his brother, and this challenge, “How dwelleth the love of God in him?” shows, likewise, the distance between the mind of God and such a Christian brother.

Thoughts on Lamentations

In reading the Lamentations one cannot fail to be struck with the abrupt introduction of the subject of chapter 3. The occasion of the composition of the book is manifest on the surface of it. Jerusalem had fallen a prey to the Chaldeans, the Gentiles had entered those sacred courts and enclosures, which need never have been defiled by the tread of uncircumcised hands; “she hath seen that the heathen entered into her sanctuary, whom thou didst command that they should not enter into thy congregation.” (Chap. 1:10.) Jerusalem's desolate condition drew forth the prophet's lamentations; yet a large part of chapter iii. is taken up with a description of his personal sufferings at the hand of his people (for the Chaldeans treated him kindly), while yet Jerusalem was uncaptured. What connection was there between his sufferings from the Jews, and imprisonment in the dungeon, while the throne of David was filled by a prince reigning at Jerusalem, and the house built by Solomon to be very magnifical, was still standing, and the, sad calamity which bad overtaken the metropolis of the land? It was just this connection which furnished ground for the sorrowing prophet, inspired by the Spirit of God to pen these beautiful poems, some of whose verses have comforted God's saints in many an age and many a trial since.

That Jeremiah was the writer of the book has been generally acknowledged, and internal evidence of it is afforded in the allusions to his own history it contains. He loved Jerusalem well; for, though Anathoth in Benjamin was the city of his birth, understanding as he did what Jerusalem was in God's counsels, how could he have helped loving her, and that dearly? Her troubles then were a grief of heart to him; and, though he had endured such ill treatment in the city from those high in office, he did not exult over her fall, but tears filled his eyes as he saw the destruction of the daughter of his people, and his heart only found a fitting vent for its feelings in the lamentations he poured forth as dictated by the Spirit of God. Gracious it was of the Lord to allow His afflicted servant this relief, gracious however not to him only, but to others, as surely will be acknowledged some day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and all the ways of God in the times that will then be past, shall be meditated on to His glory.

The book consists of five chapters, each chapter being a separate poem in itself. The first four poems are alphabetical acrostics, a device of Hebrew poetry found sometimes in the Psalms see 25, 34, 37, 111., 112., 119., 145. Each verse in chapter 1, 2, 4., begins with a successive letter of the alphabet, as does each stanza of three verses in chap. 3. Unlike some of the alphabetical Psalms the alphabet is complete in all these poems. Twenty-two letters compose the alphabet, so twenty-two verses are found in chapters 1, 2, 4, and sixty-six in chapter 3, but, whilst the arrangement of chapter 1 corresponds to the regular order of the alphabet, in chapters 2, 3, 4, the stanza commencing with ■ precedes that commencing with ■ ain, an arrangement not met with elsewhere. The reason of this inversion of the regular order of the alphabet has not been satisfactorily accounted for. The ancient versions, LXX., Vulgate, and Targum of Jonathan, agree with the order of the Hebrew, but the Syriac in each chapter reverses it, placing 2:17, 4:17, 3:49, 50, 51 before 2:16, 4:16, 3:46, 47, 48. At an early epoch some scribe of the LXX. wrote the letters of the Hebrew alphabet at the commencement of each verse or stanza, to mark that the poems

were alphabetical acrostics; but either from ignorance of the Hebrew, or from carelessness, inserted uniformly ain before the pe stanza, and pe before the ain stanza, thus misleading the reader of the Greek as to the alphabetical order in the Hebrew.

Chapter 1 opens with a description of the city and country, consequent on the triumph of the Babylonian arms. Full of people once, now as a widow, great among the nations, princess among the provinces, this enviable position Jerusalem had occupied; now she has become tributary, her independence is gone, and her gates, never entered by the boastful king of Assyria, have been thrown down by the Chaldeans.

Zion's ways, once thronged with people, are now mourning, because none come to the solemn feasts. Friendless, bereaved, desolate, how changed is her state! Besides all this the adversaries mocked at her sabbaths, or rather at the cessation of all her prosperity and glory. (Ver. 7.) Was not this enough to call forth the lamentation of any who loved her? Yet not without reason had all this happened. “Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore is she removed.” (Ver. 8.) This the prophet owns, nor he only, for from the words in verse 11: “See, O Lord, and consider; for I am become vile.” Jerusalem breaks in, and continues to speak (verse 17 excepted) to the close of the poem and chapter. She acknowledges her sin before the Lord, and what it has brought on her. Right was it for her to do this. She thus speaks of the past. But what of the future? The acknowledgment of one's guilt, and of the Lord's justice in dealing with a soul, can of itself give no hope for better times, and renewed prosperity in the future. To own one's sin, when under chastening on account of it, is simply to acknowledge the justice of God: but justifying God in His dealings with us can never illumine the heart with the brightness of hope. So throughout this chapter there is no hint of restoration to former favor and blessing, nor any relief to the monotony and heaviness of this widespread desolation. All that she can say of the future is simply this “All mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that thou hast done it thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me. Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint.” (Chap. 1:21, 22.) She has felt that God acts in government, and therefore can look for His dealing with the nations as He has dealt with her. But this is poor comfort certainly. She deserved it, they deserve it likewise, and this is all she here says. The punishment of her enemies was certain. Of her future blessing there is not a word.

In chapter 2 the prophet owns the Lord's hand in it all. He has done it, though the enemies of Jerusalem have been the active and willing agents. The hand which has smitten has been discerned, and the present abject condition of the once beautiful and royal city overcomes him. “Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people.” (Chap. 2:11.) This leads him to say in the bitterness of his grief, “What thing shall I take to witness for thee? what thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? what shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for thy breach is great like the sea: who can heal thee?” At verse 20, in response to the call of the prophet, Jerusalem again lifts up her voice to the Lord, but as yet no ray of hope has come in on the dark and gloomy picture. Her cry was in chapter 1 “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto ray sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.” The prophet, in chapter 2, asks, “What shall I equal to thee?” and still there is no alleviation of her distress. Where could she find any? who

would comfort her? God, against whom she had sinned, had provided for this, and the man, she had so ill-treated as God's messenger to her, is the one from whose experience comfort and hope can be drawn.

Little could Jeremiah have divined what use God make of his trials. He had suffered much. He bad experienced cruel treatment at the hand of his own people, because he was God's servant. Now one of God's designs in it all comes out, as the prophet, inspired by the Holy Ghost, recites what his condition had been, so similar to what his nation's was. He had seen affliction by the rod of God's wrath. They, including the prophet, could say, God had covered them with anger. He had known what it was to cry, and shout, and have his prayer shut out from God. The nation could say, “Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through.” He had been a derision to his people. They could say, “All our enemies have opened their mouth against us.” (Chap. 3:1, 8, 14, 43 - 45.) One difference however between him and his people was this: he had been brought out of his affliction, they were in theirs. He suffered with them as one of them, but the personal sufferings he speaks of, as God's faithful servant in Israel, were over. One then had been in affliction similar to theirs and had been delivered. This gives hope, and this is the way they are supported in this book. What happened to Jerusalem and the nation was the just consequence of their sins. What would happen to their enemies would be richly deserved. But this could give no hope of an end to her troubles. Jeremiah's history is therefore brought in, that God's goodness to the prophet, in delivering him out of all the trials the ungodly in Jerusalem had inflicted on him, should afford comfort to her heart with reference to the future. For just as her present condition was an earnest of what her enemies must look for, Jeremiah's deliverance was an earnest of what she could expect.

But what was the path he had traveled, and what had been his experience by the way? This was of great importance and interest to her. Hence the prophet speaks of it. To the Lord he had cried, “Remember my affliction, my misery, the wormwood and the gall;” and hope arose from the confidence that God would surely do this. “Thou wilt surely remember that my soul is bowed in me.” So some translate verse 20. Therefore he adds, “This I recall to mind, therefore have I hope.” Moreover his continuance in life, whilst bowed under the weight of his troubles, was an evidence of mercy. This point of his past history just fits in with the city and nation's then present condition. Great as were the desolation of the city, and the trials of the nation, they were not consumed. Jeremiah himself, one of them, and others too, alive on earth were witnesses of this.

How could they account for this? They deserved to be swept off the earth, but God in mercy had come in. “It is of the Lord's mercy we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.” His justice demanded the execution of the deserved judgment, but His mercy, of which they were living examples, gave hope for the future. So from this point what the Lord is, and can do, is brought in, as before had been acknowledged what the Lord had done to the rebellious city and the sinful people, “because his compassions fail not.” What a ground to stand on, what a refuge to fly to— “his compassions!” “They are new every morning, great is thy faithfulness.” What a thing it is to find one's only shelter in what He is in Himself. But what can afford more security than this? Jeremiah had learned this, now the nation must learn it; but in him they had a living example of what is here stated. In a future day the remnant will sing, entering heartily into it, “His mercy endureth forever.” Here they have to count on it, and own it as already illustrated in preserving alive a remnant, that the nation should not be utterly consumed. “God hath concluded them all in

unbelief that he might have mercy upon all" is the divine statement in Rom. 11, in explanation of His ways with Israel. Here how the consciousness that He is acting in mercy can comfort them in trial is brought out. As long as Jerusalem was occupied with all that God had done to His city and people she was occupied with the punishment of her sins, but when she can think of what the Lord is and how the continual existence of a remnant is a proof of His mercy, hope revives in her heart, and she can look up.

More, however, than this is brought out, for Jeremiah recounts his experience of the benefit of the Lord's ways with him in his adversity, and the result of it all on his heart. "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him." Thus can the man speak who had seen affliction by the rod of God's wrath. Having passed through seasons of trial, he can tell Jerusalem what he has found, a knowledge of great value. Had he only entered into trial with Jerusalem, he might have stated what he looked for. His expectations might have been just, and his forecast of the future correct, but that would have afforded no comfort like the experience actually gained. So he proceeds, "The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him." To bear the yoke in his youth had been his experience, and he could speak of the good resulting from it. He had proved what it was to hope and quietly wait for the salvation of Jehovah; for the Lord (Adonai) will not cast off forever; but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. "For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." What cheering announcements are these, the experiences of one who had been in the deep waters of affliction. But all comfort here is drawn from the Lord's known character—a wonderful rock to stand on, when all that has happened has been only richly deserved. And if the Lord (Adonai), the One who has full authority to act as He will, did not willingly afflict, He did not approve of the oppression and injustice practiced by men, even though they were the appointed executioners of His wrath. (Ver. 34-36.) And, since He was acting, all man's prognostications of evil to his enemies were valueless, when the Lord (Adonai) had not commanded it. None can override His will, none can defeat His purpose.

But as the afflictions of Jerusalem, through instrumentalities caused by the enemy, were the consequence of their sins against Jehovah, they must own them before Him. This the prophet exhorts them to do (verse 40-42); and doing this he waits in confidence the Lord's intervention on their behalf, as he had cried himself and been delivered. (Ver. 49-58.) But deliverance from evils inflicted by man, for the earthly people, involves punishment on their oppressors. This he looks for to fall on those who had afflicted him, and as his experience has been brought forward as a ground of hope for Jerusalem knowing what the Lord is, he can look onward to the future punishment of her rival, Edom, and the end of the punishment of Jerusalem.

Here then his personal sufferings cease to be the theme of the book, since their introduction has done the work they were intended to accomplish. So in chapter 4 we have Jerusalem's present condition contrasted with her former glory, and her future condition confidently expressed, as is that also of Edom, her bitter enemy. For Jerusalem there will be deliverance, for Edom perpetual desolations. (Chap. 4:21, 22.) How different now is the prospect. In chapter 1, all that Jerusalem could say was that her enemies shall be like unto her. But since Jeremiah's experience has been dwelt on, deliverance can be predicated of her, and trouble without any hope of alleviation be the portion of Esau's descendants. This the prophet declares.

In chapter 5 we meet with other speakers. Emboldened by Jeremiah's own example, who had said, “Remember my affliction,” &c., they supplicate God. “Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us, consider and behold our reproach;” and they ground their supplication on the everlasting existence of Jehovah, and the perpetuity of His throne; for it is the action of the throne they must await. What He could do for one of His own in trial has been seen; He abides forever, He changes not, so they can count on Him for their nation's future deliverance. Justly deserved was all their punishment, so they add, “Turn thou us unto thee, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.” They acknowledge what they are, and the need of God dealing with them in grace; but, side by side with that, they can take up what has been manifested of God's character, and find a hope from it. So the book closes with a description of their present condition; or, as some would read it, with a question (“For wilt thou,” &c.), which, after the prophet's recorded experience, admits of but one answer. But the statement or question, which ever may be adopted, is a confession of their grievous failure, a terrible position to be in were there no well grounded hope of escape.

Thus in this book, which contains no message from God to His people, such as they had often heard, commencing with the well-known formula, “Thus saith the Lord,” His character, illustrated by His dealings with one of His saints, gives those in trial confidence about His dealings with His people Israel, a confidence He would have them lay fast hold of, for as soon as they entered the trial, He furnished them with divine language in which they might fitly express themselves; and though traveling a road hitherto untrodden by them, they might learn what has been the experience of one in trial before them, and his deliverance out of it; an example to them how to behave under the chastisement He has inflicted, and a guide to the faithful as to the sure way out of it.

Chapter 139

The Law and the Sabbath

Man under law (converted or unconverted, regenerate or not) is lost, unless Christ be a mere maker-up of deficiency. For the law must press a man for what he is himself, if he be under it. “As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse,” —not as many as have violated, but as many as are on that ground. “They that be of faith are blessed.” Were it blessing in keeping the law, and curse in violating it, all would be infallibly under the curse; for man is a sinner; the regenerate man (the flesh being in him) fails: if he is under the law, he is under the curse. No doubt, abstractedly, the law is good; but man is a sinner in nature before he gets it, and is necessarily and wholly lost under it. In vain he says he is regenerate. The law knows no such distinction: it asks, Are you such as I require? No, I am not, says the regenerate man (who indeed alone truly says so). Then, says the law, I curse you. But, you say, I am not under law for justification, but as a rule. But I curse you, says the law, because you have not kept the rule. It cannot do anything else. It is in vain to say, We do not put man under it for justification: it puts him under itself for condemnation, if he has anything to say to it.

I quite admit that the law (taken in its highest character in the commandments the Lord extracts from the Old Testament, as that on which law and prophets hung) would be the rule of existence and joy on earth, if man were not a sinner; but then his redemption would not be necessary. Now, he is a sinner, and the law cannot be a rule of life to a sinner; not because it is not holy, just and good, but because man is a sinner. Viewed in his new nature, man fulfills the law; for love is the fulfilling of the law. But this does not put him under it. The reasoning of the apostle is, that you need not put him under it (for he alone who was not under it in spirit kept it); that, as an administered code, it was the strength of sin—entered, when man was already a sinner, that the offense might abound; that sin, taking occasion by it, wrought all manner of concupiscence, and rendered sin exceeding sinful: in fine, that we could not have two husbands at a time, nor seek blessing on two principles; that we are not under law, but under grace; and, if led by the Spirit, we are not under law, Christ having delivered us from it; that we are dead to the law by the body of Christ.

In a word, the scripture testifies, that, put a man under the law, and he is (sinner or saint) a cursed, dead, condemned creature; that it is a ministration of death and of condemnation. The law knows no mercy, and God's holiness can allow no mitigation of its terms. I cannot have the two husbands; dead to the one, I am married to the other—even to Christ risen. In His death, which infinitely magnified it, as in life He honored it, I am dead to it, though He fulfills its principles in me, as a new creature, by having taken me from under it by redemption. He who says, “I am under law,” denies, in principle, the redemption of Christ. Scripture speaks of Christians fulfilling it without (yea, by not) being under it. In a word, the Christian, viewed as a new creature, accomplishes the law; for he loves his neighbor, and does no ill to him; but he is not placed under law, for, if he were, he would be condemned by it. He sees that Christ, alive on earth, was under it, in death bore its curse, and in the power of redemption delivered us from it; while, as risen, He communicates a nature to us, which delights in and does the law, but does not put the believer under it.

As regards the Sabbath, the seventh day was the rest of God in creation; and subsequently, when Israel was put under the law to live by it and be blest in creation (though faith had then better things in view), it was given as a sign of the covenant with them. But we believe and have learned that creation is ruined; and judgment and redemption have excluded us from it, and taken us victoriously out of it, into a new creation. Hence Christ passed the Sabbath in the grave: it was buried, and our hopes of blessing here with Him in His grave. He claimed lordship over it in title of his person. Sin had spoiled creation; we are a new creation; the old creation is judged, and Christ is risen into a new one, of which He is the head—into a new condition of man. Into this in spirit we are brought, as hereafter into our true rest in glory. Hence the resurrection of Christ is the day which marks this out to us—not the close of creation labor, as the seventh was, but the beginning of resurrection, and new-creation blessing.

The seventh day was the Sabbath, as God's rest after the creation. This is not our rest. He has said, “Arise and depart: it is polluted.” The first day distinctively (and not the seventh) is the day marked out to us. The labor to prove it a seventh (or, as some have done, the seventh) is unintelligent labor to destroy the distinctive Christian position, which has its birthplace of blessings in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ on the first (not the seventh) day of the week. The seventh was rest according to the law, and looked to man to work aright, and find rest he could not. Redemption has brought him into it; but that is in the power of resurrection, the beginning of the new creation.

Hence I believe the answer of the Lord when challenged with breaking the Sabbath: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” We cannot rest either in sin or in misery. The first day of the week He entered into the fruits of His work. The Sabbath, then, was the rest of creation, and the sign of the covenant with Israel. Our testimony is, that both have wholly failed, and there is no rest in them: the grave of Christ has closed that whole scene and condition of existence, and begun a new one, in which we have a part.

But the first day of the week is marked out to the Christian, not indeed as law, but as blessing. Christ rose, Christ met His disciples on it; and again the same the week following. On the first day of the week the disciples met to break bread; on the first day they were to lay by their profits for the poor saints; and, in Rev. 1, it is definitely called “the Lord's day” As such I own it; but I do not, with human traditions, abandon the foundations of my hope in seeking rest in the creation in which Christ has been rejected, nor in the covenant of the law of which He bore the curse. The Lord's day is the first day, not the seventh, and rests on redemption basis, which declares entire failure of the other rest. Traditional views are, in these points, ignorance of the very ground on which Christianity rests. It may be added that, in accomplishment, the seventh day and the first prefigure the earthly and the heavenly rest respectively in the millennial period.

Chapter 140

Life and Incorruptibility

(2 Tim. 1:8-10; Luke 4:17, 30.)

Surprising as the statement may seem, there is hardly anything which souls have so imperfect an idea of, as the grace and purpose of God in its full scope and range—those good tidings which He announces to the prodigal. They see not to what this purpose reaches, or what that is which is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ. This it is that this passage (2 Tim. 1:10) discloses to us. We there find what is brought to light by the gospel according to the purpose and grace of God before the world began, now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death. What then has the gospel brought to light? Two things, which had heretofore been hid, even life and incorruptibility. Mark, incorruptibility—not immortality (it is the same word as in 1 Cor. 15:53). There was no doubt about immortality, that had been known before. But it is incorruptibility which, with life, is now brought to light through the gospel; and if we do not see this, we do not see the depth of what was in God's heart—what that is which He now offers to the sinner.

See how this purpose and grace of God filled the apostle's soul! When he wrote this Second Epistle to Timothy, he was in the hands of Nero; but he was not one bit troubled. Why? Because he had such a full sense of what the grace of God was. If I know what the purpose of God is for me, I get such confidence in Him that I am careful for nothing: I am not ashamed. I have got something secure on which I can lean in the hour of trial. Thus it was with Paul, though, humanly speaking, overwhelmed with trouble, being at the mercy of the Roman power; but what was that to him? He felt it to be an insignificant power in comparison to what he knew of God. He was not ashamed. He did not think of the things Nero was able to do to him; he was occupied with that which was in God's mind before the world began—the purpose and grace of God from all eternity, before the world or sin had any existence.

But to return. What came to light through the gospel? Life and incorruptibility. “He abolished death:” no stronger word could be used. It means that death has been brought to nothing—entirely ended—set aside. When what is omnipotent comes in, it is very clear that all that interferes with it must be displaced; it displaces that which had previously occupied the space. Thus Christ has displaced, abolished, death. The greatness of the thing that has come in causes the complete displacement of that which previously bore rule—death. Life and incorruptibility have come in. It was the purpose and grace of God—and it is not possible for language adequately to convey the wonderful purpose deep down in the heart of the living God, before the world was called into existence—now manifested by the appearing of His Son Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light.

Who is there that can gaze on such a picture as this, see that death is gone, and life and incorruptibility brought in, but must fall down and worship and adore the God who has done this? The one who refuses to do so refuses what alone could deliver him from the terrible judgment which rests on man—even death. What the apostle is insisting on here is the scope of God's

grace, and where that grace puts us—even in life and incorruptibility. There is life where there was death, and incorruptibility where there was corruption, so that the ground is entirely cleared of judgment. Death is swallowed up in victory. We so constantly fail to combine these two things. O may our souls embrace the scope of God's grace!

If souls had the sense the apostle had of the grace and purpose of God, they would feel very little interest in the world and things here. Look at the way in which he connects the purpose in the mind of God before the world began with the accomplishment of it in himself. “God [he says] has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel.”

Now let us turn to the passage in Luke 4. In this gospel the Lord is offering Himself distinctly to Israel as the One anointed by the Spirit 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. But Israel rejected Him. It is not that He sets aside the Jew: the Jew rejects Him. And what then? He turns to the Gentiles, and here it is that He brings out the full scope of the blessing He had to confer. “I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.” (Luke 4:25-27.) Here we find in figure the two things brought to light by the gospel—life and incorruptibility. Elijah brought life to the dead child of the widow of Sarepta; and Elisha restored the leprous body of Naaman the Syrian. After he had dipped seven times in Jordan, his flesh came again to him, as the flesh of a little child.

In these examples the Lord sets forth the scope and character of that which He Himself was there to give. He would not only overcome death, but He would do away with all the infirmity of man. He was there, like Elijah, to give life to the widow's child—to overcome death in the power of life; and, like Elisha, to heal the leper, to put an end to all infirmity and corruption—in a word, to bring in life and incorruptibility. Thus these two instances furnish us with a most descriptive type of the purpose and grace of God; and the moment the blessed Lord takes a survey of His work, He takes these two cases from the Old Testament and says, “There is the nature of the blessing I bring in—life and incorruptibility. I do away with all mark of sin. Here is a poor widow, I have none of this world's goods to bring her; but I go and visit her, and bring life to the joy of her heart. Here is a poor leper, and through death (as the Jordan typifies) I give him a new body.”

Death and corruption were the marks of sin and of the judgment of God upon it. Do we realize the nature of the judgment that rested upon man? We cannot estimate it too deeply. Can any one sufficiently enter into the gravity of the fact that God's creation—that which was made in His own image—must be subjected to death and judgment? There could be no remedy for it. The law could

do nothing of the sort; it could only show the utter inability of man to meet the requirement of God. The law made much of man. If you want to make a man commendable to men, tell him to keep the law: it gives him credit just in proportion as he keeps it. It was the very thing, could it have been kept, that would have raised man to the highest point as a mere creature; but it could not because of weakness, and hence judgment remained upon man. The very being made in God's image is a being under the judgment of God, because a sinner. How then is the judgment to be met? God's own Son comes into the world made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons. He magnifies the law, and makes it honorable. He does all righteousness here on earth. But is that all? No; He has come to abolish death; and abolished it He has, by having borne the whole judgment which rests upon man. Not only has righteousness been met, but the righteous One has carried out all the mind of God perfectly. He has abolished death in bearing the judgment, nod has brought in life and incorruptibility. The judgment was terrible; but He faced it, and abolished it. He says, “For this cause came I into the world.” He returns, having overcome all that was against us.

And what is the consequence? What place does it put us into? “In Adam all die, in Christ shall all be made alive.” “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” How did Adam discover he was a dying man? Who told him that he was naked? Judgment had come in on account of the breach of God's injunction. The sentence had passed—“In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” And though it was not at once fulfilled, Adam knew in himself that he was henceforth doomed; and that as doomed, he was naked before God, as the apostle says (2 Cor. 5), “If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.” But now God's Son comes to bear the judgment, and having borne it, He has abolished it. “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Dreadful is the fact that the creature made in God's likeness, and set upon the earth to maintain that likeness in this scene, is subjected to a criminal death; but God's Son undergoes it, and brings in life. He has risen out of this judgment and abolished death. “If a corn of wheat die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” All henceforth grows out of Him, the solitary stem. He has displaced the thing that was under judgment and is Himself the Head of a new race. “As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Death has now no sting to a believer.

But this is not all. It is not only that death has lost its sting to me, but I am looking for a glorious body. I have by the Spirit the assurance in me of a raised body. I know that this very mortal frame is entitled to incorruptibility, that this mortal thing is to be swallowed up of life! Life itself cannot have a resurrection; it is the body that has a resurrection. This body itself is to drink in the eternity of life!

We lose immensely in disconnecting these two things brought to light by the gospel. People think that the highest point of the gospel is that we have got life—that we shall never die; but that falls very short of it. God has set aside one man in judgment, but He has reared up another man in and through His own Son; and now there is more than life; there is INCORRUPTIBILITY!

The light of the gospel foreshows us ourselves no longer in this poor body, but in an incorruptible body, the folding-doors which now separate us from that wondrous state are drawn aside; and we like Him, because seeing Him as He is. “If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but

the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 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.” Mark that word mortal! the very body that is dying here is that which the Spirit (by which I know I have life) shall quicken. I am authorized to reckon that this mortal body of mine is under charge of the Holy Ghost to quicken it—yes, this very mortal frame. I cannot say I have got life only; I have got incorruptibility also. I belong to the One who set aside death, and in Him I have got life and incorruptibility. Alas! how little we have got a right sense of what we are brought into by Christ.

Look at the history of the prodigal. He was born again. He was invested with heavenly robes; he was new in mind, and also in appearance. He was transformed entirely from the far country—from all that belonged to it—to the Father's house; he was a new man—new in mind, new in appearance, and in a new place. This is what God who is rich in mercy does for a poor prodigal.

See, too, the thief on the cross! There I find a poor wretched sinner told, “This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” He was a dead man here, but alive in the life of the Son of God there!

Look at Stephen going through the most terrible death; he does not mind it one bit. Death has lost its power over him; it has no sting; there is not a question between him and the Lord. He is so little occupied with himself, that his thoughts are about those around him—about his very murderers he kneels down and prays, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.”

Review the history of man and see what man is. See all the misery, care, and anxiety he is passing through because of the infirmities of the flesh. Contrast the state of the first man with the condition and state of the new man in Christ, and your heart must be filled with wonder, and with adoring fervor. We will praise and bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

J. B. S.

The Lord's Prayer

As to this, I have no quarrel with any. I leave every one perfectly free to use or not to use it. No Christian, in his senses, but thinks whatsoever the Lord did or said was absolutely perfect in its place. The question is, What is the place He gave it?

I add, further, I think the argument against its use, drawn from asking forgiveness is weak. The forgiven state is the witness of our being that in which we have forgiveness, like all other proof of life. But for all that, the demand of it is generally a proof that true forgiveness is not known; but this is a question of spiritual perception and judgment.

But Mr. I—is singularly unhappy in his way of insisting on it. He takes the Lord's prayer in Luke, because it is said, “When ye pray, say!” But nobody says the Lord's prayer as it is in Luke, but as it is in Matthew.

But more than this: probably Mr. I-'s military education has given him little opportunity for critical inquiry. Nor is this any blame if he attends to what is more important. But if he had attended to it, he prayer has led to the interpolation of Luke, in order to assimilate him to Matthew, and that in fact we have two Lord's prayers—both assuredly perfect in their place and given by inspiration. The prayer in Luke really runs thus: “Our Father, thy name be hallowed. Thy kingdom come; give our needed bread for each day, and remit us our sins for we also remit to every one indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation.” Now for the purpose for which the Holy Ghost gives this version of it here, I believe this to be perfect, and for that for which it is given in Matthew it is perfect there. Only there too, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever,” has been added from ecclesiastical use of it, and is interpolated. But this makes sad havoc of its use as a prescribed formulary; for which are we to use, Luke's Lord's prayer, or Matthew's Lord's prayer? for they are not the same. I repeat, no Christian in his senses doubts of the perfectness of the Lord's words, and in principle every desirable thing is summed up in this prayer.

But there is a very important feature in the nature of this prayer which Mr. I—has overlooked; it is not, and could not then be, in Christ's name. The Lord's own statement is distinct on this point: “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name.” Now that Christ has accomplished redemption, and gone up on high as the Savior who has finished His work, our great High Priest, the essential character of true prayer is that it is in Christ's name; the Lord's prayer, as decidedly, was not, because it was perfect.

But the truth is, that the brethren assailed have never given any judgment or prescribed any rule whatsoever about it. Individuals may have done so. Its habitual use has dropped out, as it has amongst many other Christians (generally, I believe, save among Romanists and Episcopalians). Just as we never find it in the prayers of the New Testament after Pentecost, because the Holy Ghost led them on each occasion according to the particular wants of the moment—all surely consistent with the summary so beautifully given in this prayer; but in the freedom given by the Spirit to express every want as it arose. The use of it as a mere paternoster, having some virtue in

it, is a superstition and nothing else.

Mr. I—'s statement is a mere blunder, because nobody ever says it as it is in Luke, and it is, in fact, not simply recited, as it is in Matthew, but as tradition has given it from the Church use. The passage in Matthew having been interpolated to suit this, and nearly half added in Luke to make it in some measure agree with Matthew. Tampering with God's word is the constant and sure effect of ecclesiastical traditions, when that word is not set aside by them.

Chapter 142

Notes on Luke 5:12-26

We have seen that the call—the special ministerial call—of Peter and the rest, was taken out of its historical place, in order to present the Lord uninterruptedly in the activity of His grace, when He entered upon His manifestation.

Now we find two remarkable miracles, which, I believe, set forth sin in two different forms. The first is under the phase of leprosy. “It came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy.” Luke particularly mentions this symptom. It was not in an incipient stage or a slight case, but a man full of leprosy, “Who, seeing Jesus, fell on his face and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” The man wanted confidence in the Lord's love and good pleasure to meet his need. The Lord, accordingly, showed not only His power but His goodness. “He put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean.” This was by no means necessary for healing. Love, however, does not limit itself to man's necessities, but takes occasion by them to show the great grace of God. Under law it would have been defiling: but we shall never understand the gospel unless we see that He, who was pleased as man to come under law, was really above law. And we find these two things running through the account of our Lord's life on earth—dispensationally under law, and in His own person above it. Nothing could overthrow the rights and dignity of His person. But now we find Him both displaying what man ought to be towards God and what God is towards man. In the first case He is found under law, but this course of miraculous manifestation was the display of what God is—God present and active in goodness among men, and this in the reality of a man's soul, mind, and affections. So Christ put forth His hand and touched him, and, so far from defilement accruing to Himself, the leprosy immediately departed from the man. He “charged him to tell no man: but go and show thyself to the priest.” Thus we have in the injunction a man under law, as truly as we have, in the Lord God who healed the leper, One above man and consequently above law. “Go and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.” Until the cross, Jesus rigorously maintains the authority of the law. To have been merely under law would have defeated the whole object of the gospel; it would result in leaving man under his leprosy, under the utter loathsomeness of sin, the hopeless and defiling ruin that sin produces. Therefore if grace was to be shown, Christ must be infinitely above man, must in a human body put forth a hand which is the natural emblem of its work, and touch the man that was lost in sin beyond all human remedy. “I will” —which only God was entitled to say— “be thou clean.” Divine power at once accompanies the word. “Power belongeth unto God.”

The Lord would make the healing known, but according to law. “Go and show thyself to the priest,” whose business it was to inspect. The priest would have known the reality of the leper's case, and would be the best judge among men of the reality of the cleansing. “Offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.” There was no provision under law for healing leprosy, but there was provision, when a man was healed, for his purification, his cleansing. None but God could heal. When, therefore, the healed leper came and showed himself to the priest with his offering, it was a proof that God was there in power and grace. When had

such a thing been known in Israel? A prophet had once, with characteristic difference, indicated a cure from God, outside Israel. But God was now present in the midst of His people. The conviction would thus be forced upon the priest that God was there in Christ above law, but yet not overthrowing the law's authority. “Go, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.” If that testimony were received, they would themselves (and in due time openly) enter the ground of grace. “By grace ye are saved,” as it is grace too that enables us to walk according to God. “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” This is the Christian's ground.

Again, the more the Lord forbade his speaking, so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

The Lord, however, instead of yielding to the applause of the multitude, “withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed.” Nothing can be more beautiful than this retirement for prayer between these two miracles. However truly God, He was man, not only in maintaining the authority of the law, but also in practicing dependence upon God.

“And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and out of Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.” Now we have the other form in which sin is set forth, not so much in its defiling influence, but in the impotence which it produces—in man's total powerlessness under it. Sinful man is not only defiled and defiling, but also has no strength. The Lord accordingly proves Himself equal to meet this result of sin as much as the other. There were difficulties in the way; but what are these to the sense of need and faith? “When they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling, with his couch, into the midst before Jesus.”

Wherever real faith exists, there is earnestness. Here the difficulties and obstacles only increased and made manifest the desire to meet with Jesus. Accordingly the man submits to all these efforts on the part of those who carried him. He was let down into the very midst of the crowded assembly where Jesus was. “And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.” Not, Man, thy palsy is healed; but, “thy sins are forgiven thee.” This is very instructive. In order to reach the powerlessness of a sinner, he must be forgiven. There is nothing keeps a man feebler, spiritually, than the lack of a sense of forgiveness. If I am to have the power to serve the living God, I must have the assurance that my sins are forgiven. (Compare Heb. 9) Accordingly the first word of the Lord took up his deepest need, that which, if not supplied, would always leave him without strength. “Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.”

But forgiveness on earth at once aroused the incredulous opposition of the scribes and Pharisees. They “began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?” As God alone could heal a leper, so God alone could forgive sins; so far they were right. The great mistake was that they did not believe Jesus to be God. But then in both these miracles Jesus is man as well as God, and this comes out distinctly here. For, “when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he, answering, said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?” One was as plain as the

other. He could have said either. He had a true and a gracious spiritual motive for dealing with the real root of the evil first. The deepest necessity of man was not to rise and walk, but first of all to have his sins forgiven. “But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins (he said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy couch and go unto thy house.” He did not say, That ye may know that God in heaven will by and by forgive sins; but, “that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins.” Jesus is God; but here it is in His quality of the rejected Messiah, the Son of man, that He has power on earth to remit sins. He has authority from God, as indeed He is God; but still it is as Son of man, which adds immensely to the grace of His ways. The despised Messiah of Israel had authority on earth to forgive sins. Thus the strength that is imparted by the Holy Ghost to the believer is not at all the ground of the remission of his sins, nor is to be the proof to himself that he is forgiven, but “that ye may know,” &c. Others ought to know the reality of this forgiveness, and, above all, of the Son of man's authority to forgive man. This is God's great object. It is not merely doing good to man, but the display of the rejected man, the Lord Jesus Christ. God is putting honor on Him, not only in heaven but upon earth. Now He is exalted in heaven; but even as the Son of man, the rejected Christ, He has authority on earth to forgive sins: and this the gospel proclaims. Then the strength to rise up and walk imparted to the poor powerless sinner is just a witness to others of the forgiveness of his sins; but the great thing for such an one is not merely what others see and judge of; but what pertains to himself alone, what note can absolutely know outside, what is a word from the Lord to his own soul— “Thy sins are forgiven thee.”

The public fact, however, acts powerfully upon the beholders. “Immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.” They had not the sense of forgiveness, but at least they were filled with fear. It was a new thing in Israel.

Chapter 143

Notes on Luke 5:27-39

We have seen the grace which both cleanses and forgives. The soul needs both. God is “faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” But now it will be found, that it is not only grace which characterizes the power of God, but the direction in which it works. The cleansing and forgiving might have been solely within Jewish precincts. It is true that the latter of the two—the forgiving—is tied to the person of the Son of man (“The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins"), and that the title of Son of man supposes His rejection as Messiah. This, therefore, at length, opens the way for His working in grace among men as such—not merely in Israel. But all comes out far more distinctly in the new scene.

“And after these things he went forth and saw a publican named Levi sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.”

The Jews had an especial horror of tax-gatherers. They were their own countrymen; and yet they made themselves the instruments of their Gentile masters in gathering the taxes. Their position constantly gave occasion to the improper exercise of their authority, to oppressing the Jews and to extorting money on false pretenses or to an unlawful amount.

Hence, as a class, the publicans were peculiarly in disfavor.

But when grace acts, it calls the evil as well as those that men would count good. It goes out to the unjust no less than to persons just as far as men could see. The Lord calls the tax-gatherer Levi (who is named by himself Matthew, the inspired writer of the first gospel). He was called as it were in the very act, “sitting at the receipt of custom.” We hear nothing of any antecedent process. There may have been: but nothing is revealed. All we know is that, from the midst of this work, naturally odious in the eye of an Israelite, Levi was called to follow Jesus. This was a very significant token of grace going out even to what was most offensive in the eyes of the chosen people. When God acted in grace, it was necessarily from Himself and for Himself, entirely above the creature; there was no ground in man why such favor should be shown him. If there were any reason in man, it would altogether cease to be the grace of God. Grace means the divine favor, absolutely without motive save in God Himself, to a good-for-nothing creature, miserable and lost; and the moment that you come down to that which is utterly ruined, what difference does it make what may be the nature of the ruin, or what the means of it? If people are needy and ruined, this is enough for the grace of God in Christ, who calls such that they may be saved and follow Him.

Thus Levi quits all for Jesus: “He left all, rose up, and followed him.” But more than this: his heart, gladdened by such undeserved and unlooked-for grace, goes out to others. He “made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and others that sat down with them.” This was a further carrying out of the same grand truth. God was displaying Himself in Jesus after a sort entirely unexpected by man. It is difficult for us to conceive the light in which the Jews regarded the publicans. But here was a great company of them, and of those who were associated with them; and, wonderful to say, Jesus the Holy One of God, sits down with these

publicans and sinners. Jesus was now making known the grace of God. Man never understands this—never appreciates it. On the contrary, he charges grace (implicitly at least) with being indifferent to sin. The truth is, that self-righteousness covers sin, and is always as malignant as it is hypocritical, imputing its own evil to others, especially to grace. There is nothing so holy as grace; nothing which supposes sin to be so very evil. Nevertheless there is a power in grace which calls and raises entirely above the conventionalities of men. It supposes total guilt and ruin when it comes to deliver; and if it comes to deliver, why should it not work among the neediest and the worst? Were it human, the effort would be unavailing. But it is the revelation of God Himself, and therefore it is efficacious by the gift and in the cross of Christ.

Man, however, objects. “Their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?” They had not the honesty to complain to Jesus, but vented their spleen against His disciples. But the Lord answers for His people: “Jesus answering said unto them, They that are in health need not a physician; but they that are sick” —a simple but most satisfactory and impressive answer. Grace always enables even a man, a believer, to speak the whole truth; it is the only thing that does. How much more did He, who was full of grace, speak in the power of truth! Granted that they were sick; they were just the persons for the physician. It is not even said that they were conscious of their sickness. At least God knows the need, and God seeks the needy, and Jesus was God Himself as man presented in grace. As He said, “I came not to call righteous men, but sinners to repentance."

Then comes in another truth of immense importance. In reply to the question, “Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?” “He said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?” They were ignorant of the glory of the person of Him who was present, as much as of His grace. Had they known the singular dignity of Jesus, they would have seen how incongruous it would have been to fast in His presence. At ordinary times, in view of the evil of the first man, in the sad experience of his rebellion against God, to fast would be appropriate. But how strange would be His people's fastings in presence of their longed-for King! His very birth was announced by angels as good tidings of great joy, and the heavenly host praised God, saying, “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will towards men.” Certainly, then, His disciples should act in consistency with the presence of such a glorious person, with such a spring of joy to heaven and earth. Would a fast be in keeping with the circumstances? The Lord therefore answers,” Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?” Gladness of heart suits both the grace and the glory of the Lord. “But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.” The Lord had the full consciousness of what was at hand—of man's fatal, suicidal opposition to God, and to God above all manifest in His person. His rejection would soon come, and sorrow of heart for the disciples. “And then shall they fast in those days.”

But He furnishes more light than this. He points out the impossibility of making the principles of grace coalesce with the old system. This He sets forth by two similes. The first is the garment: “No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.” There can be no harmony between the old thing and the new law and grace will never mix. But next, He sets it forth under the figure of the new wine. “No man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst

the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But the new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved." He shows that there is an energy in the new thing which is destructive to the old. Just as the new wine would burst the old skins and thus the liquor would be lost and the bottles perish, so would fare that which Christ in the gospel introduces. Where there is the attempt to connect grace with anything of the law, the old no longer retains its true use and the new completely evaporates. "New wine must be put into new bottles." Christianity has not only an inner principle peculiar to itself, as flowing from the revelation of God in Christ, but also it claims and creates forms adapted to its own nature. It is not a mere system of ordinances and prescriptions. It has living power, and that power makes new vehicles for itself. But man does not like it.

Accordingly the Lord adds what we have at the close of the chapter, and what is peculiar to this gospel, the general maxim, "No man also, having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better." The legal system is far more suited to the fallen nature of man; it gives importance to himself and it claims his obedience, and falls in with his reason. Even a natural conscience owns the rightness of the law; but grace is supernatural. Though faith sees how perfectly suitable grace is to God as well as to the new man, and how it is the only hope for a sinful man who repents towards God; nevertheless it is wholly above the reasonings of man, and it is constantly suspected by those who know not its value and power. Man's nature cleaves to its old habits of prejudices, and distrusts the intervention of grace.

Notes on Luke 6:1-10

The evangelist is inspired to introduce these accounts of two sabbaths here. Very probably also they took place at this point of time. If so, it is because the moral object of the Spirit in Luke coincided here with the historical order. Thus we may infer from a comparison with the order of Mark, who, as a rule, cleaves to the sequence of events. In Matthew, on the contrary, these facts are reserved for a much later point of his gospel. (Chap. 12.) A vast compass both of discourses and miracles is introduced by him before he speaks of these two sabbath days. And the reason is manifest. Matthew here, as often, departs from the order of occurrence in order to show the long-continued and ample testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus, before he makes use of these incidents on the sabbath, which even the Jews themselves felt to slight their sabbatical practice, and threatened the legal covenant. Ezekiel speaks of the sabbath as a sign between Jehovah and Israel. (Chap. 20:12, 20.) And now this was about to vanish away. Hence these actions on the sabbath day are extremely significant. They occur in Matthew, in the chapter where our Lord announces the unforgiveable sin of that generation, as also at the close He disowns His natural ties, and speaks of the formation of a new and spiritual relationship, founded on doing the will of His Father in heaven. Then forthwith in the next chapter He shows the kingdom of heaven and its course, which was about to be introduced because of the utter apostasy of Israel and the consequent rupture of that economy.

In Mark and Luke this is not the immediate object. They are given, it would appear, as they occurred, and Mark had to tell. Still, it is evident that their mention here falls in with Luke's design remarkably. He takes notice, we saw in the last chapter, of the working of divine grace, which calls not the righteous but sinners to repentance. Nor will the new thing of Christ, the Second Man, mix with the old things. Yet man's preference is undisguised for the old because it suits his habits and self-importance. Grace exalts God, and must be paramount.

In this chapter (7.) we are told, “It came to pass” —not on the second sabbath after the first, but “on the second-first sabbath"—a very peculiar phrase, which has perplexed the commentators and critics immensely. It is found in no place or author but here. The only thing which really explains it seems to be a reference to Jewish customs and their feasts.

On one of these occasions (Lev. 23:10-12) the first cut sheaf of corn was waved before God. The disciples were now going through the corn-fields. Thus the connection was evident. It was the earliest sabbath after the firstfruits had been offered. This adds to the striking character of the instruction. The passover took place immediately before, as we know: the paschal lamb was killed on the fourteenth of Nisan between the evenings. Then followed the great sabbath immediately, and, on the day after, the first sheaf of corn was waved before the Lord. It was the type of Christ's resurrection. The corn of wheat had fallen into the ground and died, but was now risen again. As the killing of the lamb was the type of His death, so was this wave sheaf of His resurrection. From the day on which it was offered, seven weeks were counted complete (of course with their sabbaths), and then came the next great feast, or that of weeks. The first of these sabbaths, in the

seven weeks, counted from the day of the wave sheaf, was not the great paschal sabbath, but it followed next in succession. The sabbath that opened the feast of unleavened bread after the Passover was the first, and the following sabbath day was “the second first.” It was “second” in relation to that great day, the paschal sabbath, but “first” of the seven which immediately ensued. Thus it was the first sabbath-day after the wave sheaf; and no “Israelite indeed” could have counted it lawful to have eaten of corn till after Jehovah had received His portion.

On that sabbath then, the disciples, in passing through the corn fields, “plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.” This was always allowed, and is still, in eastern countries round the Holy Land—no doubt a remaining trace of the old traditional habit of the Jews. It is allowed as an act of charity to the hungry. What a condition for the followers of the Lord Jesus to be in! What a proof of His shame and of their need!

But nothing moved the Pharisees: religious bitterness steels the natural heart. “And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?” The Lord answered instead of the disciples, “Have ye not read so much as this, what David did when himself was an hungered and they which were with him; how he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the showbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?” The Spirit of God here takes up only David—not the priests of whom also Matthew treats, which was very suitable. He, writing for Jews, would use a proof of the folly of their objection which was before their eyes every day. But Luke refers to the moral analogy in the history of the great king David, who, after his anointing, and before coming to the throne (which was just the Lord's position now), was reduced to such excessive straits that the holy bread was made profane for his sake. God, as it were, refused to hold to ritual where the anointed king and his followers were destitute of the barest necessaries of life. For what did it imply? The depth of evil that ruled the nation. How could God sanction holy bread in such a condition? How could He accept of the showbread of the people as the food of His priests, when all the foundations were clearly out of course? Was not this evident in the hunger of His anointed and of his trusty hand? Was not the rejected Son of David as free as the rejected David?

The Lord closes this part of the subject with the declaration, “That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath." Thus there is another reason yet more powerful. David was not the Son of man as Jesus was. The Son of man had, in His own person and position, rights altogether superior to any ritual. He was entitled to abrogate it. He would do so formally in due time; for this attached to His personal glory. “The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath,” which David was not.

Nor is this all. The Lord Jesus on another sabbath enters the synagogue and teaches, where “there was a man whose right hand was withered.” And now the scribes and Pharisees with deadly hatred are watching to see “whether he would heal on the sabbath day, that they might find an accusation against him.” Such was man on one side: on the other there was a stranger come down from heaven, a man also, to fallen man, and with a heart to display heaven's and God's mind perfectly. But those who prided themselves upon their righteousness and wisdom are afraid lest men should be healed by Him at the expense of their ceremonies, and they seek to fasten an accusation against Him. “But he knew their thoughts and said to the man which had the withered hand; Rise up and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.” The thing was not done in a corner, but boldly in presence of them all.

The Lord even challenges them publicly and says, “I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good or to do evil? to save life or to destroy it?” They were doing evil; it was His to do good. They were seeking to destroy His life; He was willing to save theirs. “And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand.” It was enough: the man did so, “and his hand was restored whole as the other.” How simple, and yet how truly divine! Was this then a work done? Was the Son's healing what God had forbidden? Was this unworthy of God? Was it not, on the contrary, the very expression of what God is? Is not God always doing good? Does He forbear to do good on the sabbath day? Was not the very sabbath itself a witness how God loved to do good, and a pledge that He will bring His people into His own rest? Was not Jesus doing so to this sufferer, and giving a witness of the gracious power that will do so fully by and by?

And what was the effect upon unbelief? “They were filled with madness, and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus;” and this because He had shown that God never foregoes His title to do good even on the sabbath-day in a world that is ruined by man's sin and Satan's wiles. A superior power has entered and manifests the defeat of Satan. But, meanwhile, the instruments of Satan are filled first with his lies and secondly with his murderous hatred. “They communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.” For indeed they had no communion with God and with His mind. They were only filled with madness and communed one with another how to injure the Lord, the manifest children of their father: such did not Abraham.

Chapter 145

Notes on Luke 6:12-26

The pronounced enmity of the religious leaders led our Lord to special prayer. From man He turns to God. But there was another reason. He was about to call others to take up the work in which He had been engaged, and to carry it out to the ends of the earth. “And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” This special prayer suited both the circumstances of evil on man's side, and the fresh mission of grace on God's part. “And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.” These were to be His chief envoys in the work.

“And he came down with them and stood in the plain." This has been often misunderstood, and some have contrasted the discourse in “the plain” here with the discourse on “the mountain” in Matt. 5; 6:7 There is no ground for this. The expression does not really mean a plain, but a plateau or level place on the mountain. It was the same discourse, which Matthew set down, without presenting the special circumstances which led to particular parts of it—questions, &c.; whereas Luke was inspired to give it in detached portions here and there, and generally with the questions or other circumstances which led to each particular part. The two inspired writers, I doubt not, were governed in this by the special design of the Holy Ghost in each.

Here, then, Jesus stood, where a vast multitude might hear Him. “And a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tire and Sidon, which came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And they that were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him and healed them all.”

But now we come to what was still better, not for the body nor for this world, but for the soul in relation with God. “And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.” There is this remarkable difference in the manner of presenting the discourse on the mount here and in the first gospel. That in Matthew gives it in the abstract, presenting each blessing to such and such a class. “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Luke makes it a more personal address. “Blessed be ye poor.”

The reason is manifest. In the one case it is the prophet greater than Moses, who lays down the principles of the kingdom of heaven in contrast with all Jewish thought, and feeling, and expectation. In the other case it is the Lord comforting the actually gathered disciples, addressing themselves as so separated to Himself, and not merely legislating, so to speak. It was now the time of sorrow; for as bringing the promises in His person, man would not have Him.

Again, it is always “the kingdom of God” in Luke. “The kingdom of heaven” is more dispensational and finds its perfect place in Matthew. Luke, as ever, holds to that which is moral. Certainly the poor were little in man's kingdom. “Blessed,” were they, said the Lord, “for theirs is the kingdom of God.”

Further, it may be remarked that there is no such fullness here as in Matthew, where we have the complete sevenfold classes of the kingdom, with the supernumerary blessings pronounced on those persecuted, whether (1) for righteousness' sake, or (2) for Christ's sake.

But here we have another difference very notable. There are but four classes of blessing—not seven; but then they are followed by four woes, which in Matthew are reserved to a still greater completeness in chapter xxiii., at the end of His ministry for the same dispensational reason which is adhered to throughout his gospel. Luke, on the other hand, presents at once, first, the blessings; and immediately after, the woes. It was not the time of ease; judgment was coming. This flows from the moral character of his gospel, just as we find Moses in Deuteronomy, which has a similar purpose, telling the people that he sets before them the blessing and at the same time the curse. (Chap. 28.)

The first blessing, it will be noticed, is that which man always counts the greatest misery. So the poor in this world look to be despised; but “yours is the kingdom of God.” The next blessing is hungering now, with the certainty of being filled. The third is present sorrow with joy promised (that is, in the morning). Lastly, “Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.” Luke, it will be noticed, leaves out entirely persecution for righteousness' sake, which finds its fitting though not exclusive place in Matthew. “Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.” This supposes exercised faith, with the greatest resulting blessing. But the fact that Luke confines himself to the blessedness of those persecuted for the Son of man's sake beautifully accords with the direct addresses in his four classes. As the blessed here are immediately before the Lord, so the persecuted here are only for His sake. All is intensely personal.

Then follow the woes. “But woe unto you that are rich for ye have received your consolation.” Nothing more dangerous than ease and satisfaction in this world—there is no greater snare even to the disciple. So again: “Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger.” This of course has its moral bearing. There is leanness for the soul where the heart has all that it desires. “Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.” A still further carrying out of the danger of man's heart. “Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.” Here it is not personal only, but relative satisfaction. “For so did their fathers to the false prophets.” In all respects it is a complete picture of that which is spiritually desirable or to be dreaded. And thus our evangelist closes this part of the discourse.

Chapter 146

Notes on Luke 6:27-38

There is no such open contrast with the law as in Matt. 5-7. The reason is manifest. Matthew has the Jews full in view, and therefore our Lord contrasts “ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you,” &c. All that Luke says is, “But I say unto you which hear.” The disciples actually addressed were Jews, but the instruction in its own nature goes out to any man, and is profitable for all the faithful, to the Gentile as much as to the Jew. Notwithstanding it was pre-eminently important for a Jew who had been formed on the principles of earthly righteousness. None the less was it full of instruction for the Gentiles when they should be called to hear. The Gentile believer has the same heart as the Jewish, is in the same world, has to do with enemies and those that hate. Hence the value of such a word, “I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them which curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.” This is entirely contrary to nature; it is the revelation of what God is, applied to govern the heart of His children. “Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you.” It is this that He was doing and showing in Christ, and the children are called to imitate their Father. “Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.” This is of the deepest importance practically, for Christ is our real key according to that revelation of Him which is given in the New Testament; and this alone enables us to use rightly and intelligently the Old Testament. The Christian who is under grace understands the law far better than the Jew who was under law—at least, ought to enter into it as a whole and in all its parts, with a deeper perception of it, than the saints who had to do with its ordinances and ritual. Such is the power of Christ and such the wisdom of God which is our portion in Him.

But, besides these unfoldings of truth, there are the affections that are proper to the Christian. “Bless them that curse you and pray for them which despitefully use you.” The Lord looks for the activity of good, and the looking to God on behalf of those who might treat themselves despitefully. Thus it is not only kindness and pity, but there is the earnest and sincere pleading with God for their blessing.

Verse 29 is remarkable as compared with the corresponding portion (ver. 39, 40) of Matt. 5 They both deserve our particular consideration and well illustrate the difference of the gospels, and, what is also of the greatest importance, the manner of inspiration generally. It is a mistake to think that the Spirit of God is limited to a mere report even of what Jesus said. He exercises sovereign rights, while He gives the truth and nothing but the truth; and inasmuch as His aim is to give the whole truth, He is not tied down to the same expression, even while He is furnishing the substance of all that is needed for God's glory.

Thus in the Gospel of Matthew the case is of one who sues at law. In that case the object is to take away the coat; and the Lord bids the disciple to let the cloak be taken also. Luke, on the contrary, writes “him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also.” It is not a case of legal suing, but of illegal violence; and the spoiler who would take the outer garment is not to be resisted if he proceed to take the inner one also. This clearly gives a far greater fullness of truth than if the

Spirit of God had restrained Himself to only one or other of the two cases. The apparent discrepancies of the gospels are therefore their perfection, if indeed we value the entire truth of God. Only thus could the different sides of truth be presented in their integrity. The Jew would require especially to be guarded on the side of law; but there is also violence in the world contrary to law; and it was necessary that the disciples should see it to be their calling and privilege to hold fast their heavenly principles in the face of man's force, no less than law. To maintain the character of Christ in our practice is of greater consequence than to keep one's cloak or coat also.

Then the Lord says, “Give to every man that asketh of thee.” It is no question of foolish prodigality, but of an open hand and heart to every call of need. “Of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.” It is of all consequence that, as there should be the patient endurance of personal wrong— “unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other,” so there should be also the testimony that our life does not consist in the things which we possess. At the same time He adds for our own guidance toward others, “As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.” To love those that love us is not the point for a Christian; it is a mere human principle—as the Lord emphatically says here, “sinners also love those that love them.” It is not as in Matthew, publicans or Gentiles, but “sinners,” according to the ordinary moral tone of Luke. This was true of man everywhere, and the word “sinner” has a great propriety and emphasis. It is not only men, but bad men, may love those that love them. So too the doing good to those who do good to us is but a righteous return of which the evil are capable; as indeed lending, when they hope to borrow or to receive. Sinners do quite as much. But for us the word is “love ye your enemies, and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great.” Nor is the reward all. “And ye shall be the children of the Highest.” How soon it was made their conscious relationship! Thus it becomes the desire and aim—to acquit ourselves according to the relationship grace has given us. “For he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil.” How truly divine! We ourselves are the witnesses of it in our unconverted days.

Hence the call in our gospel does not follow as in Matthew, “Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” but Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” The perfection in Matthew seems to be in allusion to the call on Abraham, whose perfection was to walk in integrity, confiding in the shadow of the Almighty. The disciple, instructed of Jesus, had the Father's name declared, and his perfection is to illustrate his Father's character in indiscriminate grace—not in the spirit of law. Writing for the Gentiles, Luke simply calls them to be merciful as their Father was merciful. This would be obvious even to such as had not a minute acquaintance with the Old Testament, and therefore incapable of appreciating the delicate allusions to its contents here or there. Any believer could understand the force of such an exhortation as “judge not and ye shall not be judged.” The tendency to censoriousness, the imputation of evil motives, and the danger of sure retribution, are here brought before us. “Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned.”

On the other hand, says our Master, “forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.” It is the spirit of grace in the experience of wrongs. “Give, and it shall be given unto you.” It is the spirit of large generosity; and who ever knew a giver with nothing to give or receive? Yea, “good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over” —not exactly shall men give, but “shall they give” (in the sense of “shall be given") into your bosom.” Men are very far from giving thus; and the Lord leaves

it entirely vague. It might be by men or by believers: certainly God thus acts. Whoever gives will find his account sure in the far-surpassing goodness of God. “For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again” —whatever the means that He employs and whatever the time of recompense.

Notes on Luke 6:39-49

The first principle that the Lord here lays down is the necessity of a man himself seeing in order to lead others aright. This has been constantly lost sight of in Christendom. It was not in the same way necessary to priesthood in Israel, though there were duties of a priest which needed discernment, to judge between clean and unclean. Still their function lay in mere outward things, which required no spiritual. power. But it is not so in Christianity, though there are moral principles—first principles of everyday life—which are unchangeable. Yet as a whole, Christianity does suppose a new nature and the Spirit of God; and he who has not that nature and the power of the Spirit is incapable of rightly helping others. Now ministry demands this, even in the gospel. There are varying states; and unless a man is capacitated by his own personal faith as well as by the word of God, he will misapply scripture. But it is still clearer in the instruction and guidance practically of believers. He who is called to help them on must necessarily be taught of God, not in mind only but in heart and conscience, well and thoroughly furnished in scripture, so as rightly to divide the word of truth. The blind therefore cannot lead the blind. Neither is it Christianity that the seeing should lead the blind. The trim principle of our calling is, that the seeing should lead the seeing—the very reverse of the blind leading the blind.

Although every believer is supposed to see, yet he may not see clearly. He has the capacity, but may not yet have been exercised in using it. But when the truth has been brought clearly out, he is able to see it without more ado, and, it may be, as distinctly as he who had taught it. Thus that which he receives (whatever the means employed) stands on the word of God and not on the authority, either of church or of teacher. If the teacher were removed or went astray, still he sees the truth for himself in the light of God.

Thus it remains true that the seeing, whom God has qualified to lead on others, teach the seeing who have light enough from God to follow, and who know that they are not following man but God, in that they intelligently follow those who are taught of God, and who lead them according to His word, that which commends itself by the Holy Spirit to the conscience. So far is ministry therefore from being incompatible with Christianity, that it is characteristic of it. Strictly speaking, it was not a distinctive feature of Judaism. They had priests to transact their religious business for them; but Christians have ministry in order to guide and cheer them on, and strengthen them by God's grace, in doing that which pertains to the whole body of which ministers are but a part. “Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?” This is precisely what Christendom, by confounding Christianity with Judaism, is falling into rapidly. Some take the side of infidelity, some of superstition. But they both fall into the ditch, on the one side or the other.

On the other hand, “the disciple is not above his master.” Our portion is according to Christ. Christ was despised and so are we. Christ was persecuted, and so must the disciple be content to be. He has Christ's portion: if above, so upon earth. “Every one that is perfect shall be as his master.”

Then there is another danger, and that is of censoriousness. The habit of always seeing faults in others is exceedingly to be deprecated and watched against. “And why beholdest thou the mote

that is in thy brother's eye?" What is the true root of it? Invariably, where there is the habit of beholding faults in others, there is an overlooking of our own. Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" In that state of things we cannot help others: we must have our own evil dealt with first. "Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye" (love would meet another's want: self is blind and busy, forgets its own faults, but can be zealous in correcting others for its own glory)—"when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Our own fault, unjudged, always obstructs our affording real aid to another. Whereas, where we have judged ourselves, it is not only that we can see more clearly, but we can enter upon the work more humbly and lovingly. It is this that makes a man spiritual. Nothing but self-judgment can ever do it, coupled with the sense of the Lord's great grace and holiness, which is the crown of self-judgment, by the Spirit's power. But it is only the sense of the Savior's grace and regard for His holiness, which produces self-judgment; as on the other hand, the exercise of self-judgment increases our sense of that grace, and keeps us bright in it, instead of letting ourselves be lowered to the level of surrounding circumstances, and the state to which the allowance of flesh would ever reduce us. The Lord speaks very severely of such— "Thou hypocrite!" and I believe censoriousness as a rule does tend directly to hypocrisy. It leads persons to assume a spirituality which they do not possess; and is this truthful? A person who is continually commenting on others, you may therefore set down as more or less hypocritical in pretending to a holiness which is certainly beyond their measure. Such is the Lord's judgment; and you may be sure that the word which He has spoken, will so decide at the fast day. People forget that there is no way of pretending to spirituality more cheap and more imposing on thoughtless minds than this readiness to speak of the faults of others; but there is scarcely anything that the Lord Jesus more sternly refuses and condemns. "Thou hypocrite cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

Then He shows how clearly it is a question of nature. "A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit, neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." You cannot change the nature. "Every tree is known by its own fruit; for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes." The Lord did not as yet show the action of two natures, and the way in which the fruits of the new creation might be hindered by the allowance of the old. He simply points out the fact that there are two natures, but not their co-existence in the same person, which is the matter of fact even in the real believer. "Every tree is known by its own fruit." This is peculiar to Luke—I mean the putting it in so strong a manner. Matthew says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Luke makes it more comprehensive and emphatic. "Every tree is known by its own fruit." "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." This is another addition of Luke's in this place. Our words are very weighty in the sight of God, as Matthew reveals in chapter 12 of his gospel, quite in a different connection "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." He had in view particularly the great dispensational change when the Jews should be cut off, not only for speaking against the Son of man, but for blaspheming against the Holy Ghost—the sin that cannot be forgiven, into which also the Jews fell. They rejected not only the humbled Lord Jesus, the Son of man, but they refused the Holy Ghost's testimony to Him when He was glorified. They rejected every evidence that God gave them, and all advance in the ways of God was utterly loathsome to

them. The consequence was that they broke out in violent rejection, according to their own evil, of God's good things. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Their mouth spoke, and they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment, even as men generally shall; of every idle word they shall give account. The Jews have thus lost their place for the time, and God has brought in a new thing.

But Luke presents the matter far more as a moral principle. It is true of every man, that out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh: and this is an important test for the state of our souls. Our lips betray the condition of our heart—of our affections. Then there is another thing. If we own Christ to be Lord in word, how come we not to do what He says? The very saying that He is Lord implies the obligation of subjection to Him. “Why call ye me Lord, Lord; and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like. He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock.” Nothing could shake that house. “And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house.” But in vain: when the flood arose, it could not be shaken; “for it was founded upon a rock.” The heeding the words of Christ is that which survives every shock of the adversary. He who proves his faith thus in his obedience shall never be moved nor ashamed. “But he that heareth and doeth not” —which is precisely what has characterized Christendom as Judaism then and since— “is like a man that, without a foundation, built a house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.” So it shall be. The heaviest blow of the Lord returning in glory will fall not upon pagans who have never heard, but upon the baptized who have heard and not obeyed the gospel.

Moralizing for others, or bare unfruitful hearing even of Christ's words, is but adding to one's own condemnation. Nothing can be substituted for real obedience of heart. Christ was the obedient as well as the dependent Man, the bright moral contrast of the first man; and such must be and are those that are His. In all respects the discourse supposes and insists on a reproduction of His character in His disciples. It is not only promise come and fulfilled in Christ, but the manifestation of God in Him, and this now forming the disciples who are thus morally and actually distinguished from the nation.

Notes on Luke 7:1-18

We have already had the leper in chapter 5, which Matthew displaces, in order to put it along with the centurion's servant, which opens our chapter; the one being used to show the dealings of the Lord Jesus and the character of His ministry among the Jews, and the other to bear witness to the great change which was about to take place in the going forth of mercy to the Gentiles on the rejection of Israel. Luke, as we have seen, was inspired by the Spirit of God to use it for a wholly different purpose. The leper was put with the paralytic man, not with the centurion, in order to bring out the different moral effects of sin, not the change of dispensation. Here then we find that the Lord has fully separated the godly remnant of His disciples and shown out the qualities of God's kingdom as realized, and Christ's own character as looked for in them: this would extend to the Gentiles also when they were called.

Now He gives us, in the case of the centurion's servant, a manifestation of His power and goodness which carries out the truth still farther. There are certain points of difference here, worthy of all note, as compared with Matthew, which we might not expect at first sight. The manner of its relation by Luke brings in two things, one of insertion and the other of omission; both very different from Matthew. First, the embassy of the elders is mentioned here, not in Matthew. “A certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.” This brings before us not only the officer's affection for his servant, but his employment of the elders of the Jews. “And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying that he was worthy for whom he should do this, for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them.” Then we have a second embassy: “And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof.” Second thoughts are not always best among men. They constantly mar the simplicity of the first impression, which is apt to be direct from the heart or the conscience. But the mind which sees the consequences continually affects to correct these early impulses; and not seldom for the worse. Simplicity of purpose is ruined by secondary and prudential considerations. But it is not so with real faith, which makes us grow; as it is said, “Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” In this case we have what is beautifully characteristic of our evangelist, both in the first embassy and in the second. The first is his reverence for God's dealings with the Jews shown in his employment of the elders, of those who were the leaders of Israel, to send to Jesus.

But next also we see his employment of friends, who more spoke of his own heart. Matthew mentions the case, but far more succinctly. We should not even learn from the first evangelist but that he came himself “Then came unto him a centurion, beseeching him.” Whereas it is clear there was the intervention of both elders and friends. The clue to it is that old maxim of law or equity, that what one does by another one does by oneself. The second occasion brought out more fully the reconsideration in his soul of the glory of Jesus. It was natural that in sending the Jews he should ask for His presence. For not a Jew only, but a faith that leaned upon Israel, that laid hold,

as it were, of the skirt of a Jew, was always bound up with the personal presence of the Messiah; but when he spoke out his own proper feeling, and when friends consequently were the medium of his second mission, he says, “Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof.” This brings out two things; the deep sense of the Lord's glory, and a corresponding sense of his own nothingness. “Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee.” This is left out in Matthew entirely; because Matthew, summing it all up, simply speaks of the centurion. If we had had this alone, then we might have thought that the centurion actually came, and that there was only one message to Jesus. But it was not so. Here, as we have the embassies mentioned, it is added by the Spirit of God, “Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee.”

And that was just his state. It looked the saddest case. He was not worthy that the Lord should come: and neither did he think himself worthy that he should go to the Lord. How could mercy flow? Faith finds in each extremity the opportunity for grace worthy of God, and for the glory of such an One as Jesus. “But say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.” Thus the “word,” as we habitually find in Luke, has its paramount place. The turning point is not the bodily presence even of Messiah, but the word. Jesus was man, but He was the vessel of divine power; therefore He had only to say in a word, and his servant should be healed. His coming to the spot was in no way necessary—His word was enough. “For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers: and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.” That is, his faith owned that Jesus had the very same power, and indeed more; for he was only a man under authority: Jesus, the perfectly dependent and obedient man, could command all, ever to the glory of God the Father. Even he, under authority as he was, nevertheless had authority himself to order this one and that one, especially his own servant. All things were but servants to Jesus—all subserved God's glory by Him. He had only to speak the word: disease itself must obey. “Say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.” “When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

But there is an omission—and this was the second point of difference I wished to mark—an omission of what Matthew adds: “And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” At first sight one might have expected this, particularly in Luke; but a closer inspection will show that its proper place is not here. The Lord does bring it in elsewhere in Luke, namely, in chapter 13, when the time was come for distinctly indicating the change; and this on moral considerations, and not on dispensational ones only. Whereas Matthew, being intent on the impending change for Israel and the Gentiles, is led of the Spirit to introduce it in this place and time, where no doubt it was uttered. But with equal wisdom Luke reserves it for another connection. do not doubt that the moral reason for that reservation was this, that while the Lord did acknowledge, if I may so say, the simplicity of the faith of the Gentile—and simplicity in faith is power—while He exceedingly valued that faith which saw much more than a Messiah in Him, which saw God in Him (man though He really was)—saw His power over sickness, even though at a distance from it, which is so effectual a bar to all human resources, but which only displayed One that was man, but far more than man. Such was to be the faith of the Gentile, in due time, when

Jesus should be actually absent from this world, but when all the virtue of Jesus should be as, or even more, conspicuous in some important respects. Such is Christianity: and the Gentile centurion was an illustrious type of the character of this faith. Nevertheless Christianity being brought out, specially among the Gentiles, as Rom. 11 shows us, the continual danger is for the Gentile to account that the Jew has been cut off that he might be grafted in. Hence there was the wisdom of God in not introducing that solemn judgment upon Israel, as well as the strong expression of the substitution of the Gentile for him in this place. It was evidently to correct Gentile conceit. It is true the Jews were to be judged, in fact were already under judgment; but that sentence was to be executed still more stringently, when the Gentiles were to be gathered in. But the Lord waits a more fitting season for announcing it. Thus the Gentile is taught by this scene the proper feeling towards a Jew. Faith would not despise them. It may go beyond Jewish intervention, but it should honor the Jews in their own place. At the same time his own danger of presumption, as if he were the exclusive object of God's purpose, is guarded against by the omission of any such sentence here.

It is needless to say that they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that bad been sick.

But there follows, the day after, another scene of great interest, carrying out the picture of our Lord's power more completely; and it is a scene peculiar to Luke. “It came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.” Two touches very characteristic of our evangelist, as indeed the whole scene is peculiar to him: he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. It is the heart of a man touched by the circumstances of desolation, and open to the affections that suited such a case. The Lord of glory deigned to feel, and to bring out by the Holy Ghost, these circumstances. “Much people of the city was with her.” Even man showed his sympathy. What did the Lord? “When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.” He came to banish the tears which sin and misery had brought into the world. I do not say that He came not to weep Himself; for, in banishing it, He must weep as none other wept. But to her He would say in His gracious power, “Weep not. And he came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.” Vain words, had they not been His words, or from any other mouth! What a difference it is who says it! That is what men forget when they think of Christ, or speak of scripture. They forget it is God's word, they overlook God in man and by man, the man Christ Jesus. “And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.”

God was there; God was with that man in His own power: for what is more characteristic of God than raising the dead? It was even more wondrous than creation. That God should create, is, so to speak, natural. That God should raise the dead to life again, after that which is created is fallen into ruin, that He should show His all-compassing power of retrieving to the uttermost, supposes indeed man's weakness and evil, and the enemy's temporary success, but God superior to all circumstances of hostile power in the creature, and His own just judgment of sin. And this is true most evidently in the gospel. It is viewed as the quickening voice of the Son of God, and this in view of sin and of eternity. But the Lord shows it in matters of time here. “And be said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.” And our evangelist closes with words in keeping with all his spirit: “And

Jesus delivered him to his mother." If He was a man acquainted with grief, He was a man acquainted with the power of sympathy. He knew how to minister to the heart that was bereaved. "And there came a fear on all, and they glorified God, saying that a great prophet is risen up among us, and that God hath visited his people." He had the power of life in the midst of death. He was a prophet, and more than a prophet. God had anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about indeed doing good. "And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about."

Chapter 149

Notes on Luke 7:19-35

Up to the end of chapter 6, the Lord is still within the precincts of Israel, though undoubtedly there are principles of grace which intimate much more—the outgoing of divine mercy toward every soul of man. Yet until the end of that chapter the Lord does not actually go beyond the godly Jews now associated with Himself, and in mission too, as the apostles. If He gathers, He sends out from Himself to gather unto Himself: and their moral traits which distinguished them from the nation, are laid down with great emphasis and direct personal application to the close of that chapter. Then we have a Gentile's faith, who owns Christ's divine supremacy over all things, whether even disease or distance here below. Nothing could be too great for Him. Jesus, the day after, proves His power over death. Most truly man, He is nevertheless above nature, so to speak, and that which sin had brought in as God's judgment on the race. Clearly therefore in all this we have what goes beyond Israel as such; and expressly so in the case of the Gentile centurion's servant.

This, accordingly, brings in deeper things. John's disciples reported all these things to their master, who calls two of his disciples and sends them to Jesus, questioning whether He were “he that should come, or look we for another?” The Lord, in the same hour that they stated their errand, cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits, and unto many that were blind He gave sight. And then He “answering said unto them, Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard: how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached; and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.” It was a solemn answer, and should have been a very touching reproof to John. Here was One that sought not His own glory, yet He could not but point to that which God was doing, for God was with Him. He “went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with birth” God meant this for a witness. But was it not sad and humbling that be who was raised up specially to render witness to Jesus should require witness from Jesus? And Jesus, in the overflowing of His grace, gives witness not only to what God was doing by Himself, but to John also. Thus no flesh glories in His presence. He that glories must glory in the Lord. John himself failed completely in the object for which he had been sent, at least at this crisis. None can bear utter rejection but the Spirit of Christ; nothing else can go through it undimmed, unstained. Christ is not only the great doer, but greatest sufferer; and John did not look for this. He had known what fidelity of witness was in an evil world: but the testifying of the Messiah that He should be a sufferer, and consequently his own share of it as His herald in prison, seem to have been too much for his faith or that of his disciples. He needed at the very least to be confirmed; he needed to have proof positive that Jesus was the predicted Messiah, for himself or for others. We have seen the answer given him by our Lord.

Observe here that there was no point more remarkable in the ordinary ministry of Jesus, than His care for the poor. To the poor the gospel was preached. His concern about them was the very reverse of all that was found among men before. If others had cared for the poor, it was but the working of His Spirit in them, and nothing characteristic; in Jesus' case it was opening out His heart if possible, with greater care to them than to any others, the bright hopes that the gospel

announces, the display of that which is eternal for the eyes of believers in the midst of present need among those who were most liable to be overwhelmed by it. “And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.” There we find a rebuke, couched undoubtedly in the gentlest terms; nevertheless, it was that which was intended, no doubt, to deal with the conscience. John seems to have been stumbled; but blessed was he whosoever was not offended in Jesus. There is nothing that so grated upon every natural thought of a Jew than rejection and shame accompanying the Messiah or those that bore witness of Him. Man was wholly unprepared for it. They had been waiting for long and weary years for the Messiah to bring in deliverance. Now that He was come, that evil should fall with apparent impunity on His servants, and shroud Himself—that they and He too should be despised of men—was too much for their faith. They were offended in Him.

Christianity, let me say, has given immense range to the display of all this. Indeed it is the glory and blessing of the Christian. He is not stumbled at the rejection of Christ. He sees the cross in the light of heaven, not of the earth; he knows its bearing on eternal things. Present things are not the question. God has brought in the unseen, and the Christian is familiar with them even now. He accordingly rejoices in the cross of Christ, and boasts in that which is the overthrow of all the natural thoughts of men, and the judgment of the world, but which is really in the grace of God the judgment of sin, and the vindication of His own moral glory. Therefore the Christian triumphs in it. Besides, it is that which gave occasion to the infinite grace of the Lord Jesus, and in all these things he delights. He therefore has the blessing fully; and is strengthened, not offended, by the cross.

When the messengers of John go away, the Lord can speak in vindication of His servant. After all, viewed not in connection with what was coming, but according to that which had been and was, who was found among men worthy of such honor? He was no reed shaken with the wind: this they might see any day in the wilderness. Neither was he a man clothed in soft raiment: they must look to kings' courts to find men gorgeously appareled and living delicately. There is no moral grandeur in any of these things. A prophet then he was, and much more than a prophet. Such is the witness of Jesus. “This is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.” He was the immediate forerunner of the Messiah. God put singular honor on him. There were many prophets; there was but one John, but one who could be the messenger before His face. Consequently our Lord adds, “Among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.”

Yet this, be it noted, brings out so much the more the superior blessing of those who were to be in the new state of things, when it should be no longer prophecy or unfulfilled promise, but the basis of the kingdom was laid in the work of Christ. That new order was coming in, first to faith, then in power; and Luke gives great force to that which was revealed to faith, because it is known through the word of God and the power of the Holy Ghost. It is not yet the visible manifestation of the kingdom, but none the less God's kingdom, which was to come in through a rejected Son of man. Redemption may be the basis of better and still more glorious things, but it is the basis of the kingdom of God: and in that kingdom the least was greater than the greatest before—greater even than John. The least in that kingdom would rest on redemption already accomplished; the least would know what it is to be brought to God, sin put away, and the conscience purged. John the Baptist could only look onward to these things. The Christian knows them to be actually come, and

by faith his own portion. He is not waiting for them; he has them. Thus he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than John.

At the same time we are told that all the people that heard John the Baptist, and the publicans too—that is the mass, even the lowest of them—justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. They were right as far as it went. It was a witness of what was coming: it was a confession of their own sin. Thus far they justified God. But the prudent and wise, the religious, learned, and great, the Pharisees and lawyers, rejected and frustrated the counsel of God against themselves, because they refused even the preparatory work of John the Baptist. Having refused the lesser testimony, they never passed into the greater things—the reality from God. Having refused that which their own consciences ought to have proved to be true, they were not prepared to receive the gift of His grace. Christ can only in the conscience be received to salvation. Feeling and understanding will never do alone. There must be conscience. Those that had conscience awakened Godward about their sins were too glad to receive Christ. Those whose consciences slept or were roused but for a moment were never brought to God savingly. When Christ is received by faith, the conscience is active toward God, the mind and heart rejoice as they enter into and appropriate the blessing, but not otherwise. Where there is no work in the conscience, all is given up speedily. They are offended by this or that. Thus, the men of that generation were like captious children, “sitting in the market place, and calling one to another, and saving, We have piped unto you and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you and ye have not wept.” Whatever God called to was offensive. If God brought in joy, they would not dance: if God brought in a call to mourn, they would not weep. Thus, when John the Baptist came, neither eating bread nor drinking wine, the expression of no communion, because sin was in question (and how could God send one to have communion with sin?), they said, He had a demon. “The Son of man is come eating and drinking.” Now there could be communion: the rejected Christ is the foundation of all true fellowship with God. But “they said, Behold a gluttonous man and a winebibber, the friend of publicans and sinners.” Man, thinking well of himself, counts the grace of God to be allowance of sin. When God calls to righteousness, it is too severe for man: when He calls to grace, it is too loose for him. Every way man likes not God: he shrinks in presence of law; and he despises in presence of grace. “But wisdom is justified of all her children.” And the incident that follows is a striking proof of it in both its parts—the witness of it not only in her who was a sinner, but is now a child of wisdom, but also in him who could not appreciate the One who is the wisdom of God.

Chapter 150

Notes on Luke 7:36-50

As illustrating wisdom justified of all her children, as well as the superiority of the new system of grace, the kingdom of God as it was about to come in, the Spirit leads Luke to give the story of the woman who followed Jesus into the house of the Pharisee (it would seem in His train). All was arranged to bring out the truth and the grace of God with great precision. “One of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him.” The Lord goes into the house and takes His place at table. A woman in the city, a sinner, evidently of notorious character, “when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and to wipe them with the hairs of her bead, and kissed his feet and anointed them, with the ointment.”

Faith makes a soul very bold; at the same time it gives great propriety. But its boldness is inspired by the attractive power of the object looked to. It is from no qualities of our own. What for instance could be more beautifully in season? What more modest and right in feeling and act than the conduct of this hitherto abandoned woman? Now, at least, so much the more glory to the object of her faith who brought about this immense change. When she knew that Jesus was invited there, she goes too. It was the last place where she would otherwise have ventured. It was Jesus without invitation that emboldened her to go there. But when she found herself there, she does not ask Peter or James or John or any of them, as the Greeks asked Philip, to see Jesus. She goes at once: not merely her own deep sense of need, but her sense of His ineffable grace—the grace of Jesus—gave the entree at once and introduced her without further form or ceremony. Completely absorbed in an object, which she may not have defined to her mind to be a divine person, but which proved itself to be none the less divine by its all-overcoming power over her soul, she must have instinctively shrunk from the Pharisee's house under any other circumstances. Ordinarily there was everything to repel, nothing to attract her, in that house. Yet she makes no apology for the intrusion; she knew without being told that Jesus made her free to draw near; and there she is found, standing at His feet behind Him, weeping.

Remark too, how every way, every act, every feature of the case was perfectly suited to express without a word the real truth of her past as well as present, and of His goodness. She began to wash His feet with tears and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment. Mary did it another day—did that which was so similar, that some have even fancied this to be Mary. But that is a profound mistake. We hear nothing at all of her tears. We do hear of her anointing the feet of Jesus as well as His head and wiping them with the hair; so that the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. In both it was an act of devotedness to Jesus; and devotedness does not imitate, but like devotedness to the same object produces similar effects, though each with its own peculiarity. But besides devotedness, there was in this woman confession of her own self-abasement, of her horror at her sins, of her repentance towards God, and her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That was not the question with Mary. Mary was filled with a sense of the danger that impended over Jesus. She had a vague but true consciousness of His approaching death, so that the Lord counted it an anointing for His burial, gave it divine value,

expressed what her heart had not uttered even to Himself; but nevertheless what she could not but feel, though she could not articulate it. But in this woman's case it was the unaffected pouring out of a burdened heart, which felt its only relief in thus “washing his feet with tears and wiping them with the hairs of her head.” Thus, sense of grace produces effects very similar to a deep sense of His glory. They are both divine, both of the Spirit of God. Sense of His grace, shaded by the sense of her own sinfulness, was the predominant feeling in this poor woman's mind; as sense of His glory, shaded by the feeling of approaching danger, was of Mary's.

All this was lost upon the Pharisee, or rather it stirred up the unbelief of his heart. “When the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner.” His thought was that the being a sinner would unfit for Jesus. Yet he had no adequate notion of the glory of Jesus, nor of His holiness, nor of course of His grace: he would not even allow Him to be a prophet. Had He been so, as he thought He must have seen through the woman that touched Him. Simon knew that the woman was a sinner. It was known commonly in the place. If Jesus had only known her character, it was inconceivable to Simon that He would have allowed her to take such a liberty with His person. But Jesus thoroughly knew her as well as Simon; and if she was a sinner, He was a Savior. Alas! the Pharisee neither felt the sin nor saw the Savior according to God. Phariseeism is an attempt to take a middle ground between a sinner and a Savior, and this ignores both the misery of the one and the grace of the other. All worldly religion avoids a real deep confession, as of sin, so of a Savior. It contents itself with generalities and forms. They own sins, and they own a Savior after a sort: but the golden mean, which in the world's things is so valuable, is fatal in what is divine. This is what Christianity was intended to bring people out of. It is what the faith of God's good news disproves and banishes: for the gospel of salvation goes expressly on the ground of total ruin through sin. Now man, religious man, dislikes all extremes, likes moderate views; but by this moderation of view, the depths of sin are unfelt and the Savior is un-honored. The Pharisee shows it out in contrast with the woman. He was not a child of wisdom: “wisdom is justified of all her children.” He found ignorance, where she found perfect grace; and she was wise. She was a child of wisdom. Wisdom was not justified by him. It was unseen and denied. “This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner.” He did not know: such was the Pharisee's account of Jesus.

But Jesus answered what he did not utter “Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee; and he saith, Master, say on.” And the Lord then tells him the parable of the creditor. “There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty” —one a comparatively large, and the other a small sum; but neither could pay, and he “frankly forgave them both.” Who would love him most? The Pharisee would answer on human ground with correctness, “I suppose that he to whom he forgave most.” The Lord owned that he had rightly judged, and then He at once applies it, “Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house; thou gavest me no water for my feet.”

After all, the entertainment that even a Pharisee—a religious man—provides for Jesus, is very short. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks: the poor reception betrayed how little his heart was in receiving Jesus. Yet he thought to patronize Jesus. This is what natural religion always does. He thought be was doing honor to Him, but instead of that he was nourishing

himself, and proved the low conception he had of Jesus by the measured scale of that which he provided for Jesus. “I entered into thine house; thou gavest me no water for my feet” —that was an ordinary thing in these countries; “but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss” —in these lands no strange reception— “but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet; my head with oil thou didst not anoint” —but here again how entirely she went beyond— “but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.” Not even a king was so entertained. “Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.'"

It was evidently not the woman's first sense of the grace of Christ. What she had done was because with her heart she did believe in Him. She believed before she came. It was her faith brought her, but she did not know that her faith saved her. She loved before she came, and all that she did was the fruit of her love; yet not her love, but her faith saved her. She loved much, because she was forgiven much; and she felt it. Thus she was led to this love by the deep sense of her sin, and of the attractive grace of the Savior; and so she must hear how truly she was forgiven. The Lord says to her, “Thy sins are forgiven.” This drew out the inward question of those around, and not Simon's only. “They began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?”

Here, again, also it was not the first time. The Lord had said publicly to the palsied man, “Thy sins are forgiven thee.” But there was a difference, and a weighty one, between that forgiveness and this. There it was within the bounds of Israel, and it was specially in reference to this world. I do not mean to say that the man may not have been forgiven eternally; but that it was emphatically the forgiveness of sins proved by the healing of his body, and both in connection with the earth. Thus it was what may be and has been called governmental forgiveness, and after this sort I suppose it will be that God will act in the millennium. It might or might not be eternal. The millennial reign of Christ will be accompanied by the banishing of diseases and the forgiveness of sins. There will be nothing but blessing everywhere. But whether it be eternal or not will depend no doubt on the reality of the work of God in the soul (i.e., on faith).

In the case before us the forgiveness has nothing to do with the present life. It is absolute, unconditional, and eternal; and assuredly this will be found by and by in the kingdom of God, as it is now brought out in the power of the Holy Ghost. It was what ought to be in Christianity—a kind of little anticipation or example of what was to be proclaimed in the gospel; and it is peculiar to Luke. He said to the woman in answer to these doubts, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace” —words nowhere said to the palsied man. It was not her love that saved her, but her faith. Love is the exercise of that which is within us—of that new nature which the Holy Ghost imparts, and of which He is Himself the strength. But faith, although of the Spirit of God, nevertheless finds all in its object, in another. Love is more what people call a subjective thing; whereas the essence of faith is that though in man, it is nevertheless exercised on what is outside him. The whole of that which it depends on is in its object—even Christ. “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” Thus there is present salvation; and this in such power that the Lord can bid her “go in peace.” This is precisely what the gospel now announces freely, and unfolds fully, according to the value of an inestimable, exhaustless Christ and His work.

Chapter 151

Notes on Luke 8:1-18

The last chapter broke out into the widest sphere, and brought in divine power over human sickness, and death; yea, more, divine grace in presence of nothing but sin. Nevertheless moral ways are produced according to God's own nature. Grace does not merely forgive. Those who are forgiven are born anew, and manifest their new life in suitable ways, and this in due season in the power of the Holy Ghost.

In this chapter we find how grace goes forth in service. “It came to pass afterward that he went through every city and village.” How indiscriminate is His “preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God!” Anywhere and everywhere grace can go as to its sphere, but it distinguishes according to God's will; because He must be sovereign. Be pardons whom He will, and whom He will He hardens. The twelve were with Him; and not they only, but “certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chusa Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others which ministered unto him of their substance.” Thus we find grace produces fruits now, in this present life. I think it plain and certain that Mary Magdalene is not the person described in the last chapter as the woman that was a sinner. Tradition fluctuates, some supposing that the forgiven woman was Mary Magdalene, others Mary the sister of Lazarus; but to my own mind the internal evidence is conclusive that she was neither the one nor the other. In fact there is evident moral beauty in the absence of her name. Considering that she had been a notoriously sinful woman in the city, why name her? The story was not to inform anyone who she was, but what the name of Jesus had been to her. It is His name, not her's, that is the great matter. And accordingly all the effect produced in her by the Spirit of God is according to this. She does not go before His face, but behind Him. She is at His feet, weeping; washing His feet with tears and wiping them with the hairs of her head. The Spirit of God, therefore, casts a veil over her person. However much she might be the object of grace, there is no indulgence of human curiosity. It was a part of the very plan of the Spirit that her name should not be mentioned. Mary, sister of Lazarus, stands before us in scripture (whatever legends feign) a character evidently and altogether different, and remarkable, I should judge, for moral purity, as well as for that insight into God's mind which was brought about by the grace that gave it to her.

So also Mary Magdalene, although a desperate case, manifested evil of a wholly different nature. It was not corruption, but Satan's power. She was possessed; as we are told here, “out of whom went seven demons.” This was her scriptural description; and uniformly so, wherever she is brought before us. Never is moral looseness attributed to her.

But besides Mary Magdalene, one of those that ministered to the Lord of their substance, was Joanna the wife of Chusa Herod's steward. Thus God called where one might least expect it: and she that was connected with the court of the false king rejoiced to be permitted to follow the despised but true King, Jesus of Nazareth.

But others were not wanting— “Susanna and many others” but of whom we know nothing, save that which grace gave them, in honoring Jesus to find their everlasting honor. They were attracted by the Lord Jesus, and ministered to Him as they could.

“And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable.” He was not come to be a king, though a king. He was come to sow, not to gather in and reap. This He will do by and by at the end of the age. He was come to produce what cannot be found in man—to give a new life that should bear fruit for God. “A sower went out to sow his seed.” It is the activity of grace. “And as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. and some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” It is remarkable that we have not here, as in Matthew, “Some thirty, some sixty, some a hundredfold.” We have only the complete result of grace: the modifying causes are not taken into account. There was good seed sown upon good ground, as He afterward said, “That on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” The other cases are cases not of good seed producing fruit imperfectly borne; but we have the moral hindrances to any fruit at all. Luke brings out the sad and painful fact that it is not Satan's power only that hinders souls from being saved and receiving the word of God. The world hinders, flesh too, as well as Satan. Those are the three enemies that are brought before us.

The first is the open and evident power of Satan: “As he sowed, some fell by the way-side.” There was no pretense of receiving it; it was simply dealt. with contemptuously— “it was trodden down and the fowls of the air devoured it.”

The next class is, “And some fell upon a rock.” There was an appearance here. It sprung up, but it withered away, because it lacked moisture.” These represent the persons who, when they hear, receive the word with joy, but having no root they believe only for a while, and in time of temptation fall away—a very serious description; because there is apparent reception, but there is no root. They receive the word with joy—not with repentance, but only joy. Now there may be joy; but where there is no spiritual action in the conscience, there is no root. This is exceedingly serious, specially in Christendom where people are apt to be taught the elements of Christian truth, and where they may be received on the faith of a parent; not of God's word, but of a father, or mother, or teacher, brother, sister, or anybody, the prevalent religion of the country, the common creed of Christendom. All these things may operate, but it is mere nature. It is the seed sown upon a rock: there is no real root; for conscience is the real door. Without conscience the word of God has no abiding effect. The Spirit of God is not forming great scholars, but leading poor sinners to believe and be saved. It matters not who the person may be; scholar or not, he must come in as a sinner, and if as a sinner, with repentance towards God. Now repentance in its own nature gives a chastened feeling, horror of self, judgment of the whole man, certainty that all one's hope is in God, and the judgment of all that we are. This does not produce joy. Other things may gladden the heart, spite of and along with it. The mercy of God seen in Christ is most assuring; but repentance itself works sorrow. It is not in itself sorrow, but it works sorrow. They are mistaken who suppose that repentance is sorrow; but, nevertheless, such is its effect, where according to God.

That which fell among thorns represents those that, “when they have heard, go forth and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.” Luke views the matter in its full result, not in an individual, not the new nature hindered, but the new nature producing its full results. It is the word not received from one cause or another; and where it is received, it is said to be those who, “in an honest and good heart, having heard the word keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” Along with the word of God, there is the operation of the Spirit. It is these that produce this honest and good heart. Thus the heart is purified by faith; and that, working by the feeling and confession of our sinfulness. Luke, as always, brings out the moral roots, both of that which hinders, and also of that which receives the word. These “having heard it, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”

There is another point I would just observe. Matthew speaks of understanding—that is the great point with him who speaks of the word of the kingdom. Like speaks of the word of God (not so much of the kingdom, though we know it was the kingdom of God). But it is the word of God— “the seed is the word of God” that they who believe (not they who understand) should be saved. Matthew speaks of hearing and understanding; Luke of believing and being saved. This admirably suits the different objects of the gospels. Matthew shows us already a people of God dealt with, put to the test by the Messiah proclaiming the kingdom of heaven; and those whose hearts were set on worldly objects did not understand the Messiah nor care for the word of the kingdom. But Luke shows us the word of God dispersed; and although within the limits of Israel as a matter of fact for the time being, yet in its own nature going out to every city and village in the world. In principle already they were tending towards it, and about to be sent out actually in God's due time. Accordingly, it is not merely the kingdom, but the word of God. It is for man as such; and hence as the great mass of men outside Israel were wholly ignorant of the kingdom, it is a question of believing, not of understanding. It is not a word they had already, or knew things either, that they could not understand, but it is a question of believing what God was sending. It was a new testimony to those who had been wholly in the dark, and consequently it is a question to them of believing and being saved. Thus we find, even in the minutest particulars, Luke was inspired to hold to that great design which runs through his gospel—deep moral principles, and at the same time the going forth of grace towards man from God. It is as it were the gospel of God in the salvation of men—just what we find in the Epistle to the Romans; and Luke, we must remember, was pre-eminently the companion of the Apostle Paul.

Then there are some further moral principles added. “No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed: but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.” To receive a new nature by the operation of the word of God is not enough. God raises up a testimony for Himself. Where a candle is lit, it is not meant to be covered: it is to shine, to give light, “that they which enter in may see the light.” God loves that the light should be apparent. Is it not there to be seen? “For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest.” Darkness shrinks from the light, and man is in the dark, and loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. But God's resolve is that all shall appear. “For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. Take heed therefore” —not only what, but— “how ye hear.” The mingling of truth and error makes it of the greatest importance what we hear; and in Mark this is the warning: “Take heed what ye hear.” But Luke regards the heart of man; and it is not only of importance what I hear from another,

but how I hear it myself. My own state may expose me either to receive error or to reject truth. It is not always the fault of what I hear, but my own. “Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given.” Having is a proof of valuing. “And whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.” Where any do not really possess, it is not for want of God sending, but because of the unbelief that either has not at all or only seems to have. Nothing but faith possesses: and if I possess a little really, God will vouchsafe me more. “He giveth more grace.”

Notes on Luke 8:19-39

Jesus was going everywhere preaching and evangelizing, followed by the twelve, and not without the return of grateful hearts in the women who ministered of their substance. He came not a King as yet, but a sower; and instead of governing in righteous power, was but creating a light of gracious testimony as yet. He next disowns any association with Himself after the flesh, were it even His mother and His brethren. Whatever love to all, and even subjection to His mother, He owed, He most surely paid in full; but now it was a question of the word of God, and nothing else would suffice. Thus even before His death and resurrection there was a complete moral break. Flesh does not understand the things of the Spirit. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” “It was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. And He answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God and do it.” Natural links were proving themselves to be nothing now: all must be of God and grace; and this exactly falls in with the tone of our evangelist.

Then we find the circumstances of those to whom the word of God and the testimony of Christ was committed. Jesus goes into a ship with His disciples, and tells them to go over unto the other side of the lake. “But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water.” Humanly speaking, they were in great jeopardy. This was ordered of the Lord, and the enemy was allowed to put forth all his resources; but it was impossible that man should overthrow God. Impossible that the Christ of God should perish. All the blessedness of the servants, if wise, would be seen to be concentrated in the Master; and all their security derived from Him. There was therefore no ground to faith why they should be alarmed. He fell asleep; He allowed things to take their course: but whatever might happen, the ship in which Jesus was could not be unsafe for those with Him. Jesus might be tempted of the devil, and might encounter all storms; but He came to destroy the works of the devil and to deliver, not to perish. It is true that, when the time came, He went down Himself into depths of sorrow, suffering, and divine judgment—far, far greater than anything that the winds or waves could do; but He went down to the death of the cross, bearing the burden of our sins before God, and enduring all God felt against them, in order that rising again He might righteously deliver us to God's glory. The disciples, knowing nothing as they ought, through unbelieving anxiety for themselves (for this it is that blinds the eyes of God's people), come to Him and awake Him with the cry, “Master, master, we perish.” They told the secret. Had their eye been upon the Master, according to what He was before God, impossible they could have spoken of perishing. Could He perish? No doubt, separated from their Master, they might, nay, must perish; but to say, “Master, master” to Jesus, and “we perish” was nothing but unbelief. At the same time they chewed, as unbelief always does, their intense selfishness. Their care was for themselves, not for Him. “Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.” Any other would have first rebuked them. He rebuked the raging of the wind and water; and when there was a calm, He asks them, “Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another,

What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him." It is evident that all depended upon the Master. The disciples were to be sent forth on a most perilous mission; but the strength was in Him, not in them; and they from the very beginning have to learn that even Jesus inquired, "Where is your faith?"

Then we find another scene: not the enemy's power shown in stirring up what we may call nature against Christ and His disciples, but the direct presence of demons filling a man. We have this desperate case set forth in one that had been thus possessed for a long time. He had broken with all social order; he "wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs." A more dreadful picture of human degradation through the possession of demons could not be. "When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not." The demons had the consciousness of the presence of their Conqueror, the Conqueror of Satan. They dreaded to be bruised under His feet; for Christ "had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man;" and then we have a further description of this power of Satan. "For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness." Jesus was led of the Spirit there, but the devil led this man in misery; whereas Christ went in divine grace, and in order righteously to break the power of Satan.

That the awfulness of the case might be more fully brought out, Jesus asks him, "What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep." They dreaded their hour. There was the instinctive sense in these demons, that Jesus will commit them to the abyss. "And there was an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked." This at once roused those who had the charge of them. "When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country." They come out, and finding the man out of whom the devils were departed, "sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind," they were afraid. Now the state of the people discloses itself. Had there been one particle of right feeling, they would have given thanks to God; they would have delighted in the presence of One who, though to be bruised by him, was to break Satan's power forever. But though they saw "the man out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind, they were afraid," though they knew how the demoniac had been healed, still their own hearts were not won, but the very reverse appeared. "The whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about, besought him to depart from them." Ah foolish Gadarenes! who bewitched you? They all had alas! a common interest; but the common interest of men was to get rid of Jesus. That was their one desire. After the certainty of His gracious power, after the plain overthrow of Satan's energy before their eyes, after the deliverance of their fellow, restored now, and sitting, clothed, and in his right mind, all their thought was to beseech Jesus to depart from them, for they were taken with great fear. What a proof of the delusion of men! Whatever might be their terrors in presence of the man possessed with a legion of devils, they had greater fear of Jesus, and their hope and object was to get rid of Him as fast as possible. He brought in all that was holy, true, loving. He fed, He healed, He delivered; but man had no heart for God, and consequently sought only how to get rid of Him, who brought in the power of God. Any other

person was more welcome. What is man! Such is the world.

Not so with him that was healed. He besought Jesus that he might be with Him; and then stood in moral contrast with the whole multitude which besought Him to depart from them. He had been in far more awful circumstances than they. But such is the power of God's grace. It creates and forms what we should be. If any one, according to natural antecedents, might have been expected to keep far away from Jesus, it was this demoniac, so completely had he been led captive of Satan at his will. But he was delivered, and so perfectly from the first hour that his one desire was to be with Jesus. This was the first-fruit of the Spirit's action in a man whom grace had delivered—the untutored instinct of the new man to enjoy the presence of Jesus. The simplest soul that is born of God has this wish.

“But Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee.” He will have his desire later; meanwhile “Return to thine own house.” This is of price with the Lord, to show God's wonderful works, not merely to strangers, but to one's own house. Such as they would know best the shame, and sorrow, and degradation to which he had been reduced. Therefore Jesus says, “Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee.” The man in faith bows and understands; whatever might be his heart's desire, he is now to do the good, holy, and acceptable will of the Lord. “He went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.” Mark, it is of Jesus he speaks. Jesus would have him to tell what God had done; and God would have him to tell what Jesus had done. This could not have been, had not Jesus been the Son of God Himself. Though the lowliest servant of God, He was none the less also God. The man was right. He was not contravening the will of God, nor breaking the command of Jesus. Its spirit was the more kept, even if in the letter it might sound somewhat differently. God is honored best when Jesus is most shown forth.

Notes on Luke 8:40-56

Two other scenes (interwoven, it is true) close the chapter. The Lord is appealed to by Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue. “He fell down at Jesus' feet and besought him that he would come into his house.” This was the way in which a Jew expected to be healed—by the coming of Messiah to his place. “For he had one only daughter about twelve of age, and she lay a-dying.” Such was the condition of the daughter of Zion now. Israel was proving that there was no life in them; but Christ is entreated, and He goes for the purpose of healing Israel.

While He is on the way, a woman crosses His path, having a most urgent need— “an issue of blood twelve years, who had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any.” It was therefore a hopeless case, humanly speaking. Nevertheless she comes behind Him in the desperate sense that now was her opportunity, and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her issue of blood stanched.” The Lord was, of course, conscious of that which was done. If faith feels the grace and power of Jesus in any measure, and applies ever so feebly, hesitatingly, and tearfully, Jesus knows it well and yearns over that soul. His heart was towards her, and He would have her know it. She touched Him from behind. Jesus would bring her into His presence, face to face, and would have her to know that His hearty consent went with the blessing, which she had seemed to steal but really acquired by the touch of faith. Hence He says, “Who touched me?” It was in vain that Peter or the others sought to explain it away, when all denied. It was in vain to say that the multitude thronged, and therefore why ask who touched Him. The Lord stood to it: somebody had touched Him. It was not a crowd's pressure: it was not an accident. It was distinctly one who had touched Him. There was the real recourse of faith, however weak. “Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me, for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.” The multitude thronging could extract no virtue: not thus did Jesus heal. No such external pressure is of avail to bring blessing out of Him. But the soul that finds itself near to Jesus, and touches however timorously, never fails to gather blessing from Him. “And when the woman saw that she was not hid [this was not the state in which the Lord would leave her, nor any who are blessed], she came trembling, and, falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she had been healed immediately.” The glory of God was thus secured, and a bright testimony to man was rendered; but her heart needed also to be thoroughly restored. She must learn what love God has, and how completely Jesus would give her communion with Himself in the blessing conferred. Thus is the Giver known, and the gift enhanced infinitely. It was not something stolen, but freely imparted. Therefore says He, “Daughter, be of good comfort.” He uses the term of affection expressly to banish all terror and uneasiness. “Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.” What a joy it would be to her ever afterward to know that she had not only got the mercy her body needed from God, but that the Savior, the Lord God who healed her diseases, the ever blessed Physician had spoken to her, given her His own warrant, comforted her when her heart was utterly afraid, used terms even of such endearment towards her, owned her faith, feeble as it was, and finally sent her away with a message of peace.

“While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole.” (Ver. 49, 50.)

Such turns out to be the real condition of Israel, not sick only, but dead, But Jesus carried within Himself the secret of resurrection. He is equal to all emergencies, and knew infinitely better than they both the maiden's need and His own mighty power. He did not come down to do what others might have done. An angel may trouble the pool of Bethesda for a man not too infirm to step in immediately. The Son quickens whom He will. And the Jews, long rebellious in unbelief, long seeking to destroy His name who by such a claim makes Himself equal with God, will yet own the despised Messiah as their Lord and their God, and the dry bones shall live; and all Israel, at length saved, shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit! Of this the sick and now dead maiden is the pledge; and He, who then bids her father fear not but believe, will redeem the pledge He gave of old.

“And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.” (Ver. 51-56.) The spirit of scorn then and there was but a little sample of what is to be; but such can have no portion in the blessing permanently. For while many of Israel that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, with some it will be to shame and everlasting contempt, as surely as with others to everlasting life. For they are not all Israel that are of Israel. But the word of gracious power shall go forth from Him in whose eyes the virgin daughter of Zion was not dead but sleeping; and she shall arise. And He who at length wakes her up from her death sleep shall care for her and strengthen her for the great work to which Zion will then be called. It was, however, but a passing act of power then; the time was not yet come for more; and Jesus charged them to tell none what was done. If He were not received Himself, if His word were refused, it was vain to publish His power. Unbelief would only turn it to worse evil.

Chapter 154

Notes on Luke 9:1-17

THE last chapter showed Christ's testimony to the change that was coming. This chapter gives us the twelve entrusted with the same testimony. They were to go forth representatives of Christ everywhere, invested with the power of the kingdom. They had both power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, as well as a mission to preach the kingdom of God. The Lord gave them their authority. They were to be manifestly dependent on the King, and in a remarkable way the King's power would open and none should shut, and shut and none could open. Nevertheless, this sovereign power of the King over the hearts of His people Israel was not without the maintenance of their responsibility. Whoever rejected Him must bear his burden. The word, however, is, “Take nothing for your journey, neither staves nor scrip, neither bread, neither money.” It must be manifestly the resources of God, however He might work by men. They were not to care for themselves, not even to have two coats apiece. “And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide and thence depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.” Thus then they departed, “and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing every w here.”

Then we find the working of conscience in Herod. “Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed because of the thoughts of men, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead; and of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.” Herod's conviction was that he had beheaded John: he knew this too well. “John,” he said, “have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.” But desire in divine things, unless it be accompanied by the action of conscience in the sense of sin on the one hand, and of grace on the other on God's part, never comes to any good. Many a man has heard God's testimony gladly, and given it all up. Many a man has had respect for the witnesses; but, as we see in Herod's case, first as to John, it did not hinder him from beheading John; and next, as to Jesus, it did not hinder him from taking his part in the last scene of the uttermost humiliation of the Lord. There was nothing of divine life in the action of his conscience. There was no working of grace, because there was no sense of his own sin and need in God's sight, which might drive him to God.

The apostles return, telling the Lord of all that they had done. But it is evident that they knew not how to avail themselves of the power that was entrusted to them. So Jesus takes them and goes aside “privately into a desert place belonging to the city, called Bethsaida.” And now we see how perfectly Jesus wielded the power of which He was the vessel as man. For although He had turned aside privately, the people follow Him there; and he received them and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.” No one ever came amiss to Jesus. No need ever was presented without drawing out His grace. No retirement led Him to treat those who came as intruders. But the difference between the Master and the servant appears. For “when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.” But this would not suit Jesus. “He said unto them, Give ye them to eat.”

Unbelief begins at once to reckon. They counted the loaves and the fishes: there were but five loaves and two fishes, except they should go and buy meat for all this people. Thus those, who ought to have been the witnesses of the power and grace of God, are ignorant of the Lord's present resources and only think of what might be procured by money from man. The Lord says to His disciples—so great was His grace that He would put honor upon them even in their weakness and want of faith: “Make them sit down by fifties in a company. And they did so, and made them all sit down. Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.” Viewed as the Son of man, and the Son of God as man (and so Luke does view Him), God was with Him; not only when He went about doing good, but when men followed Him into the wilderness. There was no difference. Everywhere the grace of God was upon Him, the power of God with Him. So He blest them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. He fed His poor with bread. It was not the true bread which came down from heaven, because He, and He alone, was this. But He who was the true bread loved to feed them even with the bread that perishes, though He would have loved still better to feed them with that bread which is unto life eternal. The Lord Jesus alone knows, therefore, how to use all the resources of the kingdom of God. He waited for no special time and for no special circumstances. He is able to bring in the blessing according to need now; for God was with Him, and He was with God touching all circumstances. “And they did eat, and were all filled; and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.” There was more at the end than at the beginning, though five thousand men, besides women and children, had partaken. Such was Jesus; and such will Jesus be when the kingdom of God appears—the furnisher of all the nourishment, and joy, and blessing of the kingdom. Nor is He less, or other, but the same now, though the manner of exhibiting His gracious power is according to the present purpose of God in the Church. But He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

Chapter 155

Notes on Luke 9:18-36

The Lord is again praying alone, as we have found Him in previous parts of this Gospel, and indeed in others. So it was at His baptism, when the Holy Ghost descended on Him; and afterward in His ministry, when we are told that He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed. This was when multitudes came to hear and to be healed, whereon the power of the Lord was there to heal afresh. So also before He chose the twelve apostles, it is said, “He continued all night in prayer to God.” It was after men were communing to kill Him, and before the appointment of the apostles and the discourse on the mount.

Now He is about to disclose His death. The sense of His entire rejection filled His soul, because of the unbelief of the people; and the Father was about to give the most direct personal witness of His glory, as well as to show what was reserved for Him in the kingdom. He would own Him as Son of God now. He would display Him by and by as the Son of man. Accordingly “it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.” This elicited from Peter, in reply to the direct question of the Lord— “Whom say ye that I am?” the confession that He was the Christ of God.

It is remarkable how Luke here omits what Matthew records. In point of fact He owned Him to be the Son of God as well; but this is peculiar to Matthew. The reason why it is given in Matthew seems to me because that is the title of Christ’s personal glory, which is the joy of the Christian. The Church of God delights in Christ as the Son of the living God; Israel will hail the Christ as the Son of David. The world, all mankind, will be blest by Christ as the Son of man but the Christian and the Church have their joy in him, as the Son of the living God. It is clearly the most elevated and properly divine of His titles. It is intrinsic and personal. Along with this we find in Matthew, and in him alone, the revelation from the Lord Jesus that upon this rock He would build His Church, that is, on this confession of His name. Consequently as Matthew is the only one who gives us His name, and the confession of it by Peter, so the Lord alone is represented there as about to build the Church.

All this disappears from Luke. Here Peter simply says “the Christ of God.” The Lord “straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing.” This is a remarkable word. Why withhold from people that He was the Christ of God? Why this reserve as to His Messiahship? It was useless to bring it forward. Some said one thing, and some another. No man had faith in Him except those that were born of God. Man as man rejected Him. The Jews rejected Him. The disciples confessed Him, Peter pre-eminently; but it was no use to go on preaching Him as the Christ or Messiah of Israel. He was the Anointed of God, but in truth He was going to suffer, and consequently the Lord introduces another title in connection with His cross. “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and be slain and be raised the third day.” It was particularly this very title that the Lord habitually gives Himself. So in Matthew: “Whom say ye that I the Son of man am?” Peter then confesses Him as really the

Jewish Christ, but also “the Son of the living God.” The Lord intimates that they must drop the first. It was useless to speak about it, it was too late. Had the people received Him, He would have reigned as Messiah. But, morally speaking, that could not be. On the one hand man was unbelieving, wicked, and lost; on the other hand it was according to the counsels of God that Jesus was to be put to death on the cross, and to rise into a new creation in which He would have man His fellows. If Jesus had not been crucified, it would have proved that man was not altogether so evil as God had said. But as man really is profoundly bad, according to the word of God, it was a moral certainty that man would crucify the Lord Jesus, and so God predicted by His prophets. The Lord now reminds them that the old proclamation as the Christ must close. He was going to die as Son of man. He had His death always before Him. It was the settled counsel of God the Father, and the settled purpose of the Son. He came to die, not only knowing it, but with His heart fully devoted to the accomplishment of the will of God, cost what it might, as it did cost His own death and rejection. In His death He wrought atonement for our sins. Here, however, His death is simply viewed as rejection from man: “The Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day. God’s part in the matter, either in judgment of our wickedness or in introducing redemption, is not stated. Assuredly it was then and there, as it was always destined to be; but sometimes the one side of truth, sometimes the other, is presented in scripture. He is rejected by the heads of the Jews. It was a sad and humbling fact that they should cast off their own Messiah, who was, adds He Himself, to “be raised the third day.”

This suffering of the Son of man at once defines the path for the disciple. “He said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself; and take up his cross daily and follow me.” It was in no way enjoyment of earthly things. That would be all suited and seasonable in the kingdom when He reigns as the Christ, as well as Son of man, according to the hopes furnished by the prophets. There we find every kind of proof of God’s beneficence, and men’s hearts will be filled with gladness. But such is not the character of Christianity. The cross shows us our true path. If Christ suffered, the Christian cannot expect to be above his Master. Christ was going to the cross; therefore if any man would come after Him, “let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?”

The truth comes out. Everything now depends on eternal life. It is no longer a question of living long on the earth. This was and will be all very well for the Jew. But the cross of Christ is the burial of all Jewish thoughts. Hence if a man is careful to save his life now, he will lose it. He may save it in a lower sense, but he will lose it in a deeper. He may save it in this world, but lose it for eternity. But if I am willing to lose it in the lower, I shall save it in the best — the eternal — sense. The death of Christ brings everything to a point: all then becomes the momentous question of eternal life and salvation. The Jews did not think of this. They panted for a great king that would raise them to the pinnacle of earthly greatness. Christianity shows us the One on whom all turns, Himself crucified; and those who come after the Crucified cannot escape from the cross. Each Christian must deny himself, and that not merely once, but daily taking up his cross and following Him. “For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels.”

There lies the solemnity of the issue. If ashamed of One rejected and of His words, He will be ashamed of us in glory. We have not Christ personally, but we have Him by faith, His name, and also, as a test of our truth of heart, His words. A man might plead the words of Moses and the prophets; but these would not avail now. A man who merely attached himself to the words of the law and the prophets, to the exclusion of the New Testament, could not be saved. When God brings out the full revelation of Christ, I must go forward and be subject to what God gives. The Jews hold on to the truth of the unity of God in order to deny the truth of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. True faith now values all that God gives. It is not real if it does not value what He gives for the present time. Hence the test is truth freshly used of God for the actual moment, and not merely what was known of old. Unbelief is always wrong; it takes advantage of what is traditional to deny what was newly revealed.

“Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory.” There we find the proper glory of the Son of man. It is a rejected man who is exalted on high; but He will come in His own glory, and “in his Father’s and of the holy angels.” His being a man did not at all touch His divine rights. The angels were all subject to Him as man. He had a title above them because He was God; and He had won a title superior to them, because He had died on the cross. Thus by a double title the Lord Jesus has not only all mankind but angels subject to Him as man. “But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God.” This was a bright witness calculated and intended to strengthen those who were meant to be forward and at the head of things in God’s testimony and in the Church. The reference is to Peter, James, and John, who were permitted a sight of the kingdom of God before it comes in power.

Eight days after, when the glory was about to appear, the Lord prays. “And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.” Luke is the only one of the Evangelists who mentions His prayer here, and that, as He prayed, He was transfigured. “And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias,” the representatives of the saints dead and raised, living and changed. Moses died and is here seen as risen, and Elias as the pattern of those who shall be changed. “Who appeared in glory and spoke of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.” This is the great topic of heavenly discourse. There can be no fact above so precious as the death of Jesus. It will be the grand theme throughout eternity. It is the foundation of all the ways of God in redemption, the highest moral glory of God as it is the fullest proof of His love. “They spake with him of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.” On earth Jesus takes the highest place, as alas! the lowest also for us and our sins, yet He is too the highest in grace, as He will be in the ways of God. It will be so in the days of the kingdom, when God’s counsels shall appear for the earth as well as the heavens.

“But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep.” They slept in the garden when Christ was going through His agony, and they were heavy with sleep when Christ’s glory was being revealed. Thus man is utterly worthless for communion, whether with suffering or glory, and this not man without life from God, but the chosen disciples, the future pillars of the work, the most worthy and excellent of the earth. Yet these, as they could not watch one hour when it was a question of the sorrows of Jesus, so they were oppressed with sleep when His glory in His kingdom was revealed. So wholly incapable of answering in his soul to God’s display is man of the

grace of Christ or of the glory He intends for him.

“And having awoke (or kept awake), they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.” Indeed he did not know. It was sheer forgetfulness of the personal dignity of Jesus. “Let us make three tabernacles,” one for his Master and the other two for His servants, Moses and Elias. Would he then put his Master, the Lord of all, on the same level with the head of the law and the chief of the prophets? Peter thought this would be great honor for Him! He was altogether astray. The root of all wrong is depreciation of Jesus. The power for all that is good is faith in His glory. Thus Peter, in a human way seeking to honor Jesus, in reality lowers Him; and this God the Father would never allow, specially in a disciple. “While he thus spake, there came a cloud and overshadowed them,” the well-known symbol of Jehovah’s presence in Israel: it was not a dark, but a bright, cloud, as we are told in another gospel: “And they feared as they entered into the cloud,” meaning, I suppose, that the disciples feared as they saw Moses and Elias enter the cloud. They could not understand that men, even glorified, should be within the circle of the peculiar presence of Jehovah. The pavilion of His glory might tabernacle over man; but it seemed too much to them that men should thus be at home there, even though it were men in glory.

More follows: “There came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.” It is no longer a question of Moses and Elias. The law and the prophets were admirable forerunners, and not a tittle can fall unfulfilled to the ground; but the Son of God comes and necessarily takes precedence of all. “This is my beloved Son: hear him.” Do not put Moses and Elias on a level with Him. They were to be heard as the finger-posts which point to Christ; but when Jesus the Son of God is there, He is to be heard. This is Christianity. Almost every working of unbelief in Christianity now consists in lowering Jesus to the law and the prophets, or, at any rate, to man, the first man. No one born of God would slight the law and the prophets; but it is one thing to own them as having divine authority, quite another to put them on a level with the Son of God. They were divine witnesses, but the Son must have His own due supremacy. In all things He must have the pre-eminence. And so God the Father here insists upon it. “This is my beloved Son: hear him.”

“And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone.” This is really the very strength of our souls —that we have but one person who is or can be the full objective revelation of the mind of God to us. We honor most the Father, and we show best the power of the Holy Ghost when we have Jesus before us, and we are following Him day by day. “This one thing I do,” says the apostle. “And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.”

Chapter 156

Notes on Luke 9:37-56

The next scene plunges us at once into the realities of the world as it is, the more painfully felt because of the bright vision of the age to come on the mount of transfiguration, whether in the sample of the kingdom of the Son of man (or the inner scene of those who entered the cloud). Here on the contrary we have the world as it now is through the power of Satan. “It came to pass that on the next day when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. And behold, a man of the company cried out saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son, for he is mine only child: and, lo, a spirit taketh him and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again; and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not.” It was a picture indeed of Israel and we may say of man. Such was the power of the demon over him; and the fact most distressing was that the disciples were quite unable to meet the case. They were men of God; they were His most honored servants, already sent out with power and authority by the Lord Jesus, as we saw in the beginning of this chapter: and yet they could not cope with this aggravated form of demoniacal possession.

“And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you? bring thy son hither.” The Lord had thus before His mind the vivid feeling of His approaching departure: “how long shall I be with you and suffer you?” It was for want, not of power but of faith, that they could not cast the spirit out. Faith always supposes two things; sense of the weight and yoke of evil that presses on man, and confidence in God as always superior to evil in His gracious power and supreme. There may be failure but never final defeat where room is left for God to come in, and the heart cleaves to the certainty of His glory concerned in the matter. The lack of this was what grieved the Lord Jesus; their inability was due to want of faith and of self-judgment.

“As he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.” The Lord had thus before Him a fresh and, if possible, mightier effort of Satan; but His power, or rather the power of God, which He wielded as the self-emptied Son and obedient Man, rose above all the efforts of Satan. He rebukes the unclean spirit and heals the child. “And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.” Yet why should they have been? Jesus was God Himself manifest in the flesh. But the blessedness of Jesus was this, that He never did anything simply as God, but as the Man that was dependent on God. Had He not preserved such a place and wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost as man, He would have failed to preserve the perfect place of man and of servant in the world. But this was His human perfection from the time He came born of woman. Nothing could be so powerful as either motive or example to us.

“But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears; for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.” They were astonished with a wonder, which, while it was a homage to what was done, was also an indication of a want of intelligence. The Lord now brings out a far deeper cause of

amazement and of adoration, had they only felt it rightly. Alas! it is what unbelief always stumbles at. “The Son of man should be delivered into the hands of men.” He who could rebuke all the power, not only of men but of Satan, was nevertheless to be delivered into the hands of men. Such was the purpose of God, such the perfect willingness of Jesus the servant of God and Lord of all! Whatever would demonstrate the truth of man's state and of Satan's power here below; whatever would evince the ruin of the people of God and the destruction of His glory through their ruin on earth; whatever would prove the vanity of all present hopes for man and the world—for this Jesus was willing to encounter all and to suffer from to the uttermost, that God might be, first morally, then in power glorified, and man be set in perfect peace outside it all, first by faith and at last in palpable fact and forever. The work of atonement came within this most complete humiliation of the Son of man; but these words of Christ speak simply, it is evident, of His suffering at the hands of men.

“But they understood not this saying.” Yet scripture was full of it; but the will of man blinds him to what he does not like, and nowhere so much as in scripture. The Jews greedily caught at the vision of glory and the promises for the people—the exaltation of their nation and the downfall of their haughty Gentile oppressors. And so the words of God, which described the humiliation of the Messiah, were quite overlooked in general and always misunderstood. Even when our Lord here told them, not in prophetic form, nor with any obscurity of figure, but in the simplest terms possible, they understood not His saying. How little the understanding of scripture has to do with its language! The true cause of darkness lies in the heart. The only real power of intelligence is in the Holy Spirit who makes us willing to bow to Christ, sensible of our own need of such a Savior and really in earnest that God should save us on His own terms.

This was not the case with the disciples— “They understood not this saying.” They had not confidence fully in His love. Confidence in Him has much to do with intelligence of His word; and even if we do not understand, confidence in Him leads us not to cavil nor to hurry but to wait and count upon Him that He will surely clear up what we do not understand. He will reveal even this unto us. The disciples merely dropped the matter. “They feared to ask him of that saying.” The real state of their hearts is brought before us in the next account: “Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.” This was what they wanted—to become as little children. It is not here presented as in Matthew, in order to enter the kingdom, but in relation to Christ and to God Himself. They wished each to be greatest; there was consequently a discussion which of them should have the higher place. A little child does not think about this; but is content with its parents' love and with that which comes before it. It is not occupied with thoughts of itself, nor should it be. Indeed this is just what is wrought in the heart by conversion; and especially by the subsequent power of the indwelling Spirit of God giving us to see Another's greatness and goodness, in the enjoyment of which we forget ourselves. “Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me.” The reception of Jesus is the reception of God Himself and thus the root of real greatness. But practically, flowing from this, to be least is the true greatness of the believer now. Such was Christ Himself. He was willing to take and did take the place of the most despised of all.

“And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.” Here comes a considerably subtler form of self. The grossest form was in the question which of them should be greatest; but now comes a certain disguise of self, which consists in apparent zeal for the Master's honor. “Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.” What a reason! It was well, it was an immense honor, to follow Jesus; but John betrayed himself by his very language “he followeth not with us.” Had he kept Jesus before his eye, he never would have uttered the complaint. He would have seen that it was for Jesus to call; as they had been chosen by Him in pure grace unto this honor. It was evident that John looked at it as an interference with the apostles, and a failure in acknowledging their importance. But Jesus, superior to everything of a fleshly nature, answers, “Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us.” Jesus, in the sense of His humiliation and looking for it even unto death, owns whatever is of God. It was not Satan that cast out Satan. It was the power of God that cast out the demons. Nay, more than this. The demons were cast out in the name of Jesus; why then should John have a jealousy so narrow and unworthy? Why should he not own the power that answered to his Master's name. Ah was it really his Master and not himself that he was thinking of? “He that is not against us is for us.” Where it was a question of the unbelief of the nation, where Jesus was utterly despised, the word then is, “be that is not for us is against us.” The converse principle is true, no doubt; but where there was a simple-hearted man, serving God according to the measure of his faith, the Lord vindicates his action in His name. By John's own account the power was there which answered to the name of Jesus. There was one who resisted the demons, using the name of Jesus against them. And there was power; for he did cast them out, and this through the name of Jesus. Had there therefore been a true care for the glory of the Lord Jesus, John would rather have rejoiced than have sought his prejudice. “Forbid him not,” says the Lord, “for he that is not against us is for us.”

Then comes the last scene I shall notice at this time. “It came to pass that when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him: and they did not receive him because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.” There was no readiness for the Lord. Their dislike of favored Jerusalem made them utterly forget the glory of Jesus and the testimony of His gracious power which these very Samaritans had every reason to know and to feel grateful for. But “they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.” How often circumstances bring out the state of our hearts! What they would not dare to do, were it simply a question of Jesus, some paltry selfish feeling arouses some latent jealousy and brings all to light. These same men stumble over the personal glory of Jesus; others, attracted by the world, prove that they have no heart for a Savior, by seeking what it has of present things to bestow. Others again, disliking the inevitable shame of the cross of Christ shrink from the trial it brings them into, and prove that they have no faith, because wherever this is real, it looks fixedly and simply to Jesus. Where other objects come in, there is a turning aside; but where real faith is, it welcomes the cross and receives Himself, and to such God gives title to become His children.

What was the effect of Samaritan party-feeling now on the disciples? “When his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and

consume them even as Elias did?” Now it was not contrary to the principles of the disciples that Elias should thus be the instrument of divine judgment; but how painfully did James and John (for now John was not alone), two that afterward were of great weight and value in the Church of God, show their little perception of the grace of Jesus! The Lord of glory passes On, accepting His rejection, and bows to the ungrateful unbelief of the Samaritans. But His two servants, deriving everything of which they could boast, the only One that could take away their evil and bestow the goodness of God on them, under pretense of honoring Jesus, would command fire to come down from heaven and consume them like a Jewish prophet. How little love had they for souls! As little was it a true regard for Jesus. It was honest Jewish nature, though in apostles. It was no doubt indignation, but this far more springing from themselves than for Jesus. Jesus turned therefore and rebuked them. It was not now simply a correction of what they were saying, but a rebuke to themselves. “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” The next verse would seem to be—the first part at least—an interpolation. It was not a question of saving souls in this place. If inserted here, it would make man the reason and end; whereas the suggestion was contrary to the display of what God is, and inconsistent with His grace, which does not merely save the soul but fills the heart with the moral glory of the Lord Jesus. “And they went to another village.”

It is God who speaks in the person of the Son, who, while truly man, manifests also the Father.

Notes on Luke 9:57-62

In all this context, since the transfiguration, human flesh is judged in its various forms. Indeed even there the flesh was shown quite incompetent to appreciate the glory of God, or the new things of His kingdom. Thenceforward disciples and man manifest their unbelief and consequent powerlessness before Satan; their unintelligence as to the sufferings of the Son of man; their worldly ambition, cloaking itself under the Lord's name, though so utterly inconsistent with Him; the party-spirit that overlooks the Spirit of God who deigns to work sovereignly; and the spirit of grace that God was now showing in Christ as contrasted with all that even an Elias did.

But now we have not the failure of the apostles themselves, but the judgment of those who either were or wanted to be disciples. This is brought before us in the close of the chapter in three different forms successively. “It came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.” It was apparently a good confession, as it was a zealous resolution; but man never can go before the Lord. No one ever did give himself up to God—he must be called. He who says “I will follow thee” knows not his weakness. When we think what man is and what Jesus is, for man to say “I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest” is manifestly the grossest presumption, yet man sees no presumption in it. So ignorant is man, so besotted in unbelief, that to his eyes real faith seems presumptuous, whereas there is nothing so humble; for faith forgets itself in the goodness and might of Him on whom it leans. It was the expression of self-confidence to say to Jesus, “Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.” Now he who does this always miscalculates. He overlooks the glory of Christ and the depth of His grace. He overlooks also his own total want of power and perhaps even his need of forgiveness. No man is competent, till he is called by grace, to follow the Lord. And when we are called, the Lord does not send us forth at our own charges. He gives liberally the needed wisdom and ability to those who ask Him; but He goes before us. To follow the Lord whithersoever He went, before His death (as in this case), was beyond man. When even Peter, at a later date, said something like it, it was just before he denied the Lord. Such is flesh. “I will follow thee to prison and to death,” said Peter; but in fact the very shadow of what was coming frightened him. A servant girl was enough to terrify the chief of the apostles. It made him tell lies with oaths; whereas the same Peter, after the death and resurrection of Christ, when his own conscience had been purified by faith according to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, became bold as a lion, as he finally followed the Lord not only to prison but to the death of the cross. But this was altogether the strength giving effect of God's grace, not of his own power, which utterly failed. When his natural energy was gone, he was stronger than ever: be was only truly strong when he had no strength of his own. The Lord answers the scribe (for such we know him to be from another gospel) “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” The man was judged. He came for what he could get, and the Lord had nothing to give him—nothing but shame, and suffering, and destitution. The foxes might have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the rejected Messiah had not an earthly resting-place. There was to be found in Israel no man so poor as the Lord Jesus. When He wanted to teach them a lesson of subjection to Caesar, whom their

sins had set over them, He had to ask for a penny to be shown Him. We do not know that the Lord ever possessed a fraction. “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” It was no use therefore for this man to follow Him in hopes of gaining by it. What now could be gained there by it on earth, but a share of His rejection? “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

But now comes another case, considerably different, where the Lord takes the initiative.

“He said unto another, Follow me.” The flesh, so bold in its offers to go after. Jesus, is really slow to follow when He calls; as this man, though called, instantly feels the difficulties, and says, “Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.” You find this in true believers. When a person has Christianity before his mind as a theory, all seems easy. He thinks he can do anything. Ordinarily, where the faith is genuine, difficulties are felt; and this man pleads the very first of all human duties. What would seem not only reasonable, but so incumbent on him, as first to go and bury his father? Did not the law command the child to honor father and mother? To be sure; but One was there greater than the law. The God who gave the law was calling, and if He says Follow me, faith gives up everything, even be it father, or mother, or wife, or children, for Christ's sake. Persons must come to this sooner or later; generally, in the long run, every one who thoroughly follows Christ. It is not felt at every moment; but the principle of Christianity is the sovereign 'call of God in Christ that takes one clean out of the world. Whilst still in the world one belongs to another—absolutely and only to Christ to do the will of God. Hence all natural ties must be in comparison like the green withs with which Samson was bound, and which were no more than tow before his all-overcoming strength. The most intimate of natural ties are after all but of flesh; whereas flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The link with Christ is of the Spirit; and the Spirit is mightier than the flesh. Therefore, whatever might be the claim of a dead father, or of what was due to the feelings of a Jew—for the Jew regarded him that did not bury his father with suitable care and affection as lost to all that was proper and as unworthy of any association with them; yet if the distinct person and call of Christ comes in at that moment, surely He must be followed.

This was a test; Christ knew all and not without moral motive had called him at that point precisely rather than any other; and the. question for him was whether Christ was more to his soul than any one or thing in the world besides. Was it really so, that standing well with the Jews and with his family was of more consequence to him than Christ, than heaven or hell, than eternity itself? This man may have honestly desired to follow Christ, yet he pleads for a delay on the road. But the Lord's answer to him is “Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God” —a perplexing answer to a person whose eye was not single. Thus the Lord tries faith. He does not put things in the simplest possible form to faith or to unbelief; above all, where there is something allowed that hinders. The Lord will be inquired of. So He says here, “Let the dead bury their dead” —that is, let the dead spiritually bury their natural dead— “but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.” It was not only that this man was called to follow Jesus, but to be a witness for Him, to be a proclaimer of God's kingdom. How could it fare with others, if there was not faith in him to give up all for Christ? One of the reasons why there is so little power in the testimony of Christ is because there is so little faith in those who testify it. Mohammedans, &c., constantly tax Christian missionaries with this. “You profess to have a revelation from God in the Bible; but you yourselves evidently do not act according to that book. How can you seriously ask us to believe?

How can we think that you believe it? We believe our books, and if we accept loyally the Koran, with its system of prayers and ablutions, we follow it. We scrupulously conform to the prescriptions of the prophet. You affirm that Christ preached the sermon on the mount for instance. Yet you constantly get out of the difficulty of not following it by the plea that the times are changed. We stick to the Koran every day and at all costs. God is the unchangeable God, and He has a constant claim upon the faithful." Thus one of the main obstacles to the conversion of other religionists is the way in which ministers of Christ expose themselves by their want of faith to the mockery of their adversaries. This increases the heart's unbelief, because for the most part professing Christendom does not even pretend to adhere inflexibly to scripture. They say that times have so altered that they can take only such parts as suit the present day. They think nothing of seeking the world and its glory and everything that will attract flesh. They think to draw some by this means and some by that; whereas the truth is, they are themselves drawn away by the world from the truth and will of God. To court the countenance of man, to seek what the world values, is practically to abandon Christianity for the will of man. It is the living mingling with the dead, instead of leaving the dead to bury their dead. The Lord's call must set aside every other.

The third case again differs somewhat. "Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house." There we have one who allows the amenities of life to be "first." It was no such serious detention. It was merely to pay them ordinary courtesy. But the Lord insists upon the absolute renunciation of every hindrance. "No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." If Christianity is anything, it is and must be everything. It admits of no rivals and of no delays. It could not be the kingdom of the true God if it tolerated the turning aside of His servants forever so little. Christ is the first and the last, and must be all to the heart or He becomes nothing through the wiles of the devil.

Chapter 158

Notes on Luke 10:1-16

The mission of the seventy is peculiar to Luke. It has in itself a character of grace about it, though really on its rejection the harbinger of imminent judgment to Israel. all things are now made manifest since the transfiguration of the Lord. The former mission preceded that great event and is given elsewhere; but Luke adds the mission of the seventy. His death, His suffering, His rejection have all been fully announced, and accordingly His departure from the world, because of the inability of Israel or even of the disciples to profit by His presence in Israel, and then judgment of all the forms of human nature in hindering the following of Christ or His service. That we have had. Now as concluding the testimony to Israel, this new mission is sent out to announce not only before the revelation of His rejection, but since it, the kingdom of God.

“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also and sent them two and two before his face, into every city and place whither he himself would come.” The Lord's heart felt for the people as He said, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few.” Now there are more laborers raised up by far as the pressure of the need was before His soul. “Pray ye therefore, the Lord of the harvest.” Nevertheless He was encouraging prayer, because before He told them to pray He is Himself appointing these seventy to go forth. He was the Lord of the harvest. At the same time He warns them what they were to expect. “Go your ways, behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.” He well knew, and they were to know, what man was, even in Israel. Flesh was completely judged. The Jews are no longer regarded as the lost sheep of Israel, but as wolves with themselves to prey on as lambs.

But there is another thing. While they were thus sent forth in a spirit of grace, exposed to the evil of man, they were to go with the full consciousness of His glory. “Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, and salute no man by the way.” The danger was imminent, the duty was urgent. There was no need of preparation and resources from without; they were entitled to count on the power of His name providing for them in Israel; for He was the King, let men reject as they might. So on the other hand, there was no time for salutation. Such courtesy is all very well for the earth and for the present time; but eternity was coming more and more distinctly before the minds of the servants as it was fully before the Lord. “Salute no man by the way.” Deeper interests were at stake, and everything that would occupy with that which might be dispensed with was only a hindrance.

“And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.” Thus there was the full word of grace sent forth to them. At the same time so much the worse for those who rejected it. Nevertheless the peace should turn to them again. It was not war; they had nothing to do with that. “If the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.” Peace rejected was returned to themselves. “And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire.” There was to be no covetousness, no self-seeking; but, casting themselves upon their allegiance of heart to the Messiah, they were to take such things as were given. While the Messiah acknowledges the worthiness of the laborer, the laborer is worthy of his hire. Those that were of Him would feel it and own it. They were not to

go from house to house. This would be derogatory to His glory because it might be charged with a seeming indulgence of self-seeking. The grand point was the solemn claim of the Lord Jesus in Israel.

“And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” There was no want of power, but the word was, “The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” This they were to say to them. It was not a question of miraculous exhibition to strike the mind or eye, or anything for present life merely, but “the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” “But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you.” Thus the rejection of this mission would be most serious, and the very measure of grace out of which it springs would make unbelief the more perilous, and the judgment of it more peremptory. “Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” It would not alter the truth. They might reject, but the kingdom of God bad come nigh unto them.

“But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tire and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tire and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.” This is a solemn principle much too easily and too often forgotten. People are apt to pity the heathen and to think of distant lands; but while it is well for those who are thoroughly rejoicing in the Lord to feel for those who want Him, there cannot be a greater delusion than to suppose that when the judgment comes, men as such will be better off, e.g., in England than they are in Tartary. No doubt, wherever there is faith in a rejected Christ, it will bring into heavenly glory; but the rejection of Christ when He was on earth, or now that He is in heaven, is fatal. More particularly the rejection of a heavenly Christ is ruinous; even then the Lord could say it should be more tolerable for Tire and Sidon at the judgment than for you. Not that Israel was not privileged; but privileges despised or misused bring only a deeper perdition upon those who reject or pervert them.

Therefore it is that these cities rise up before the Lord. It was bad enough for the cities Chorazin and Bethsaida, inasmuch as there had been mighty works done in them and they had not listened, and the Lord said, “If the mighty works had been done in Tire and Sidon which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.” Israel were more guilty than the heathen, and the Israel of Christ's day peculiarly so. No heathen had ever listened to such a testimony. To refuse the word of God is to expose to the judgment of God. “It shall be more tolerable for Tire and Sidon at the judgment than for you.” And if there was one city that had even greater advantages than these, it was Capernaum, which is called His own city, where He was pleased to live and labor. And what as to it? “And thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven shalt be thrust down to hell” —a still more awful judgment.

But it would not be a light thing now for those who rejected the disciples any more than for those who rejected Himself. He adds, “I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.” Mark, not merely for Tire and Sidon, but for Sodom. The Lord clothes the

words of His disciples with a more awful judgment than His own, because the disciples were more liable to be despised than their Master. Men might take advantage of His disciples and say that they were only men of like passions with themselves, and had their faults, and so they had. But the question was, What was their testimony—their mission? and from whom? What were the blessings held out and what the penalties with which God menaced those who scorned them? They testified of God's kingdom at hand. There was nothing really that had ever been presented to man to compare with this. Others as prophets had borne witness of it, but avowedly from a distance; but now that it was at hand, to despise those who preached it would be to despise Jesus and God Himself, as to listen to them would be a true way of honoring Jesus.

“He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.” It was contempt of God Himself, and this in all the painstaking of grace and loving desire that His people should possess the truth. It is still worse now where mankind refuse the gospel, because its message is the revelation not only of the kingdom, but of the grace of God that brings salvation. To put it away from the soul is to insult God in the depths of His love, and knowingly to reject His mercy for eternity. For now it is a question of heaven and hell; of eternity with God or away from Him. All depends upon receiving Christ, and the testimony that He sends. The principle of this was begun now in the mission of the disciples, although literally it was addressed to Israel in view of the kingdom. Still deeper things begin to manifest themselves; and whether it be then or now, to reject His testimony, by whomsoever it may be brought, is to reject Himself and God.

Chapter 159

Notes on Luke 10:17-24

The seventy come back, when their mission was ended and their testimony given, saying, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.” This was a great witness of Messiah's power. Men in Israel always looked, and of course especially the faithful, for the manifestation of divine power through Messiah over Satan in the world. It was not so much God as such to act directly, as through man in Israel, the Seed of the woman, the Son of David. And now what a sign and seal was given, seeing that not only did He cast out demons, but they, His servants, through His name did the same! Nevertheless, the Lord marked this the more to be a conclusory mission to the people and land, and that His Messianic glory, the object of promise, however true, was in no way the great truth that was beginning to unfold itself. Heavenly things were about to come in through His rejection and death. Therefore says He unto them, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” It was quite true. The exaltation of Satan through man's fall was gone as it were before His eyes, and the Lord had the full vista of God's counsels in sight, the total destruction of the enemy's power. “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” But while this was true to the Lord's vision who sees things that are not as though they were, suggested by His disciples' casting demons out of men; there were things even better than these, though He fully owned what there was then. “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” He openly confirms what He had given. There was thus authority to trample upon the well-known symbols of Satan's craft and torment for man, and over all the power of the enemy, whatever it might be. They were delivered from all calculated to injure; “nothing shall by any means hurt you.” They belonged to the Savior. “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” To belong to heaven, to be called to that seat of divine light and blessing, was a far greater prize: the rest was Satan's power broken on the earth, a sample of the earthly kingdom, and the powers of the age to come. But a rejected Christ opens the door into the presence and glory of God. This was a matter of far more real and profound joy—that their names were written in heaven. To this the Jews were utterly blind, as man is still; for his cool assumption of heaven, as if it were a natural end for man, is even more evil and presumptuous. Present power and authority are great in his eyes; heavenly things are little, because they are distant and unseen. Nevertheless they are nigh to faith which beholds them, knowing that they are the great reality, and that present things are only the arena of sin and folly and distance from God. But the disciples must learn this; therefore the Lord would lead their hearts into this deeper joy: “rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” Now in a legal state of things the wise and prudent have their importance. The law admits of angelic media, and supposes human administrators; it desires things in due order, regulated in a way that commends itself to men's reason and conscience. But grace meets a ruined world when all this is set aside; and Jesus,

rejected by those who boasted of the law, rejoices in the grace of God, and thanks Him as the Father, whom the law never revealed. He was Father in His own divine relationship to the Son, entirely outside the ken of men or the scope of their thoughts or imaginings. The Jews who had the law never saw the reality of divine relationship. It was dimly couched under various obscure forms and terms in the Old Testament. For all through God was a veiled One, dwelling in the thick darkness, not revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This is come out clearly in and through Jesus our Lord; as also light and incorruptibility for men through the gospel, not through the law. In the law it was simply one God, the Jehovah-God of Israel, and He only behind the intricate barriers of the Levitical system. But the gospel shows the veil rent, and, through Him who went down to the cross, the Father known by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Thus Christianity supposes the full revelation of the true God and the persons of the Godhead. Hence it was impossible to have a distinct or full, if any, knowledge of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost under the law. And it may be a question how far those who are in the spirit of the law enter into it fully now; they may be orthodox, and recognize the general certainty of it; but this is a very different thing from entering into and enjoying it practically as the known truth and blessing of the soul.

Our Lord Jesus then, perfect in everything and with divine knowledge of all, says, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast bid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.” It was no longer a question of Israel and the land; neither are wisdom and prudence of account now. Things that are highly esteemed among men are judged as an abomination in the sight of God. He had revealed His mind unto babes. Clearly this was grace. There was no claim; and babes would have seemed the very last persons to whom God would have revealed what was beyond the wise and prudent, what the vulture's eye had not seen. “Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.” It was His pleasure, He took complacency in His own love. And grace does not find but makes objects proper to itself and for God's glory.

Grace creates, the law does not. It does not give a nature capable of enjoying God, nor can it give an object, still less one worthy of God Himself to rest on; it can only press a claim on man from God. But grace does all this and more through Jesus, who both gives us a nature capable of enjoying God and is also Himself the object to be enjoyed.

Hear how He presents Himself even here: “All things are delivered to me of my Father.” It is not now merely the land of Israel or the Jewish people, but “all things;” the Son of man with all things handed up to Him—a higher glory even than dominion over all peoples and tongues. (Dan. 7) It is the universe put under Him; and this because He is the Son of God. “All things are delivered to me of my Father.” It is not merely the Ancient of days giving the universal kingdom under the heaven to the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven; but the rejected man on earth, revealing Himself as the Son of God, the Son of man, who is in heaven, as is said elsewhere, to whom His Father has delivered all things. We see not yet all things put under Him. But He speaks of a far deeper blessing and glory than even this universal inheritance. “No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father.” He is a divine person—the glory of His person is unfathomable; it is for the Father alone to know and delight in, though for us to know it unknown. No man knoweth; indeed it is not merely no man, but “no one knoweth who the Son is, but the Father: and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.” It is clear that none but the Son knows of Himself the Father. But it is not merely true that the Son knows the Father, for He reveals Him to others—

“he to whom the Son will reveal him.” This is Christianity; and to lead on the souls of the disciples from their Jewish expectations to the heavenly and divine truths of Christianity is the object of the Lord Jesus henceforth, as of the Spirit afterward. It is remarkable that it is said, “no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father,” but it is not added he to whom He will reveal Him. Thus God envelops the Lord Jesus as it were with a divine guard against the prying curiosity of the creature; and if the Son humbled Himself in grace to man, God forbids that man should approach that, as it were, holy ground. Not even with unsandaled feet can he tread there. God reserves the knowledge of the Son for Himself; He alone really penetrates the mystery of the Only-begotten. The Son does reveal the Father; but man's mind always breaks itself to pieces when he attempts to unravel the insoluble enigma of Christ's personal glory. All that the saint can do is to believe and worship. No man knows the Son but the Father. On the other hand it is our deepest comfort that the Son not only knows the Father but reveals Him. The revelation of the Father in and by the Son is the joy and rest of faith. It is true even of the babes. The little children (παιδ■α) and not merely the young men and the fathers, know the Father (1 John 2); and this falls in with these unspeakably blessed words of our Lord in Luke a. “And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings 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.” Thus, the Lord Jesus, while He is preparing them for greater things, fully owns the blessedness of the present.

Chapter 160

Notes on Luke 10:25-37

The immense change from law to grace was set forth remarkably in the incident which now follows; and the more so, because the law was now directly introduced in order to show what man was under it, and that there is nothing which really fulfills the law but grace. Those that have only the law before them never accomplish it; they only talk about it, and would cover their self-condemnation by despising others if they could. Those that are under grace are the only persons who do fulfill it (Rom. 8:3, 4); but they do a great deal more. They understand what is suitable to grace, while in them the righteousness of the law is fulfilled.

“And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He did not ask, “What shall I do to be saved?” The law neither supposes the ruin of a sinner nor proposes salvation. It cannot but address itself to man's competency, if he has any. The law is directed to those who assume that man can do what God requires; and consequently it is on God's part a command of that which is due to Him, what He cannot but ask if they take such a ground with Him. The measure of duty which God proposes to man who thinks himself capable of doing it is the law.

The lawyer accordingly asks Him as a teacher, what he is to do “to inherit eternal life.” The poor broken-hearted jailer at Philippi asked a far different question, and one more befitting a sinner—what he should do to be saved. The lawyer was not in earnest; he was a mere theorist. It was a subject for a discourse or argument. There was no real concern about his soul, no sense of his own condition or of what God is. “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” The Lord answers him, “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” because, when he took this ground of doing something to inherit eternal life, he had betaken himself really to the law. Thus the Lord in His wisdom answers the fool according to his folly. A fool thinks he can keep the law, and that this is the way to inherit eternal life. The Lord accordingly says, “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” because he is going to convict him of the utter futility of all efforts on that ground. “And he, answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.” That is, the whole man must love the Lord our God, inwardly as well as outwardly, “and thy neighbor as thyself.” This was excellent as a statement of duty: nothing could be better; but how had he done it? and what hope was there for his soul on any such footing as this? If he took the ground of doing something to inherit eternal life, this must be the way. He was wrong in the very starting-point of his soul, wrong in what he thought about this great concernment, because he was wrong about God; and indeed he that is wrong about himself must be wrong about God. The great fundamental difference of a soul taught of God is this, that, conscious of his own sinfulness, he looks to God and to His way of being delivered out of it; whereas a mere natural man in general hopes to be able to do something himself for God, so as to put Him under a kind of obligation of giving eternal life. Human thought always denies God's grace, as it denies its own sinfulness and need of grace. However the answer was all right on that ground, and the Lord says to him to this effect, “Thou hast answered right; this do and thou shalt live.” But he was dead. Now the law never deals with the man as dead, and therefore in Old

Testament times there never was such a thing brought out as moral death. We never find a hint that this was known in the law or even the prophets. But in the Gospels and Epistles man is treated as dead and as wanting eternal life, which the Son of God alone can give; and He gives it not by law but by grace—two totally opposed principles. Therefore it is by faith that it might be by grace; whereas the law appeals to that human ability, of which man is proud. He deems himself competent to do the will of God and thus to live. The Lord answered him, “This do and thou shalt live,” but there is where he was wrong. He could not do it, and on that ground therefore he could not live. He was dead though he did not know it himself, morally dead while he lived. “But he, willing to justify himself,” not to justify God but himself, “said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?” This is the constant resource of a heart that is not obedient. It makes difficulties and starts objections. “Who is my neighbor?” One would have thought this a very simple question to decide, who one's neighbor was, but the plainest things are just those which the disobedient heart is prone to overlook. Had he entered into the obedience of Jesus (1 Peter 1:2) he would not have needed to ask the Lord; he would have known himself. He and all must be taught by a parable. “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.” This is just the course of man. From the place of blessing, Jerusalem, he goes down to that of the curse, Jericho, and there of course falls among thieves. Such is the world. Having no real unselfish love, it does not give, but violently takes where and what it can. He “fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.” This is just the world. “And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.” There was no kindness, no purpose of love in his heart—only a concurrence of regrettable circumstances for the poor man: it was not the priest's matter. There was no grace active there, and so the priest, this highest expression of the law of God, goes that way, “and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.” He did not know who his neighbor was any more than the lawyer: self always blinds. Surely he ought to have known; but the law never gives right motives. It claims right conduct from those who have not right motives, in order to show that they are thoroughly and inwardly wrong. By the law is the knowledge of sin; it is never the power of holiness. The law is said to be the strength of sin. It simply shows a man his duty, but convicts him that he does not practice it. So with the Levite. “Likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.” He was next the priest in point of position, according to the law; but he looks on the man and does not recognize his neighbor any more than the priest. He too passed by on the other side. “But a certain Samaritan,” who had nothing to do with the law at all, “as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.” There was grace before his eyes which had won his heart, and accordingly be at once finds out his neighbor. Love sees clearly, whatever the heathens may dream. The law merely speaks of his neighbor to a man without heart, who has not ears to hear or eyes to see his neighbor; but grace gives eyes, and ears, and heart. The Samaritan accordingly, when he sees him, seeks him with the suited provision of grace for the future as well as the present. “He set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.” Thus the righteousness of the law was fulfilled in him who walked not after the flesh but after the Spirit. This was precisely the way of grace. It was so that God sent His Son in quest of those who were fallen among thieves, who were more than half dead. They were wholly dead; and the Son of God gave not only all that He had but Himself. He far exceeded all that man or a creature could do. Only God could so humble Himself and so love; only He could work suitably to His humiliation and His love.

And not only does this Samaritan do all the good he can, but he takes measures that when he himself goes away, the needy one shall be taken care of adequately. “And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.” It is the provision of grace which not only furnishes the blessing with all freeness, but secures it fully when the giver is no longer here. And Jesus will repay when He comes again. He took care Himself of the sinner when He was in the world. He takes care of him now that he is brought in at His sole charge; and when He comes again, all will be repaid. “Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves? And he said” —even this lawyer, because man has a conscience— “He that shewed mercy on him.” Consequently it is not law that can avail. The great transition then is made plain to all who hear. Mercy, and mercy alone, can suit a lost man; but mercy is distasteful because it exalts God; whereas law is used by man to exalt himself and his capacity. It is only when we believe our own ruin, perhaps after efforts under law, that mercy first saves our souls and then opens our eyes and makes us see a neighbor in each needy soul, without asking Who is he? Mercy makes us feel every one that wants our help and compassion to be our neighbor; whereas the spirit of legalism contents itself with asking, “Who is my neighbor?” Without Christ, law merely acts upon the natural man; though it shows a man his duty, it never gives him power or heart to do it. The spirit of grace alone gives divine motive and power. “What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh,” &c. Grace has shone in Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost works according to the same grace in those who have received Jesus, who are not under law but under grace.

Chapter 161

Notes on Luke 10:38-42

We here enter upon a new section of the gospel. The Spirit of God sets before us, speaking now generally, two things: first, the unspeakable value of the word of God, and more particularly of the word of Jesus; secondly, as we shall see another time, the place and exceeding importance for the soul of prayer. But then there are many things to be considered in connection with each of these topics, of which we shall only now look at the first. There is a moral comparison between the two sisters who loved the Lord. She that chose the better portion was the one whose heart clung most to the word as a link between the soul and God. As we all know, it is by the word of truth that any are begotten of God, for it is the seed of incorruptible life, that word which liveth and abideth forever. But then it is much more than that. It is the means of growth, of cleansing the way, of enjoying God, and consequently of spiritual blessing day by day: this was made very apparent in the difference between Martha and Mary. They were sisters in the flesh, believers both of them, loved of Jesus. Nevertheless, difference there was; and the main cause and evidence of it between the two was the superior value that Mary had for the word of Jesus. The word of God has a formative power over the mind and affections, and she is proved to be the one who most prizes the Lord, and who most really and in the truest communion serves him who has the deepest value for his word. This we find as a general principle elsewhere in scripture (“this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments"), and particularly in john 14, “if a man love me, he will keep my words;” but here it comes out practically in the case of Martha and Mary. “a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.” she fully owned him to be the messiah. There was faith of God's giving in Martha's heart; but it saw no more in him than simply the messiah. Her faith did not go farther. “and she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word.”

Mary is not characterized by such a reception of the Lord, by loving attentions and hospitality, though founded, no doubt, upon a growing out of faith. “Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word.” Some might suppose this to be a far less proof of love; but to Jesus it was incomparably the more acceptable of the two. Martha did honor to Jesus as a believing righteous Jew might; she owned herself subject, Himself as King, and was as happy as her faith would admit of in thus receiving the Lord to her house in the day of His humiliation; but her sister sat at His feet and heard His word. In her case it was not so much what she did for the Lord; but she had such a sense of His greatness and love that her one point was to sit at His feet (an attitude of far deeper humiliation than Martha ever took) with the consciousness of the divine fullness there was in Him for her. She heard His word; but Martha “was cumbered about much serving.” How many there are who are fond of serving the Lord, but are much more full of their own doings for Him than of what He is to them as well as in Himself! This deceives many. They measure faith by their round of bustle and activity. But in truth this always has a great deal of self in it. When true humility animates, there may be much done, but there is little noise. Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

“But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she come and help me.”

Thus not only was there a large spice of self-importance in Martha, but, as usual, she felt herself constantly slighted and incommoded by others. The spirit of egoism measures by itself, and cannot appreciate a love which is deeper than its own, and which issues in ways and forms which have no beauty in its eyes. Therefore Mary, instead of being an object of complacency to Martha, troubled her: Why did Mary not help her? Martha's thoughts circled round herself. Had she been thinking of Jesus, she would not have dictated to Him any more than have complained of Mary. “Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.” What want of love and lowliness! She does not even leave it to the Lord to direct. Self is always captious as well as important, and as swift to impute to others as to arrogate to itself what is unbecoming. “Bid her therefore that she help me.” She forgets that she was but the servant of the Lord. Who was she to wish to control Him? Martha was full of zeal, but of her own ways (not to say her own will) in serving Christ.

Jesus, however, answers with the dignity that was proper to Him, and the love that always sees true to its mark (for there is nothing that gives such a single eye as genuine affection), but which at the same time vindicates the true-hearted before those who misunderstand them. He loved them both indeed, and says in reply, “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.” He deals first of all with herself. She ought not to have been thus anxious and careworn. Martha did not know what Paul knew so well. “This one thing I do.” There was never a man with such multitudinous occupations as the apostle; there was never another with such a heart for the Church. And yet he could happily employ his hands in making tents, because he would not be burdensome, though he had a right to be so as an apostle of Christ. What was it that carried him through all his unexampled toil and suffering, undistracted and happy? The reason was that one person, the only worthy object, filled and governed his heart. This made him thoroughly happy in the midst of the deepest afflictions. This “one thing” is precisely what is needful for the child of God, and the very thing that Martha practically had not. It was not that she did not believe in the Lord; but she had her own thoughts too. Nature was strong. Jewish feeling and tradition held their ground; all these things wrought actively in her mind; and to such a person, receiving the Lord Jesus was not only a question of doing Him honor, but herself too. In such cases self always, more or less, mingles even with the desire to show present respect to Jesus.

“But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, Which shall not be taken away from her.” There is nothing like it. That good part is prizing Christ and His word, not thinking what Mary could do for the Lord, but what the Lord could do for Mary. To receive all for her soul from the Lord, instead of receiving Him into her house, was before Mary's soul. This was the one thing needful—it was Christ Himself. He is all, and Mary felt this. That “good part shall not be taken away from her” —it is eternal. Martha's honors passed away; they were shortly about to end, for soon Jesus would not be known after the flesh; but must be known, if at all, in a higher glory than that of the Messiah. Soon, therefore, the possibility of receiving Him with a hospitable heart could not be Martha's portion; for at His cross it would necessarily be cut short and disappear. But Mary's position of lowly faith in hearing His word could be always. Even in heaven the essence of it will not be lost. Communion with Jesus, delight in Jesus, humility of heart before Jesus, will always be true; it is the part of real devotedness and of the deepest love. Great as faith and hope may be (and their value cannot be over-estimated on earth), still, after all, love is that which abides forever; and love now is in proportion to the power of faith and hope. All these things were incomparably

richer and stronger in Mary's heart than in Martha's, and this because Christ filled her heart—this one thing that is needful.

Notes on Luke 11:1-4

But blessed as receiving Jesus by faith may be, and sitting at His feet in the delight of love to hear from Him more and more, prayer must not be forgotten. It has an incalculable value for us here below. It is in this world that we pray. Worship is the outgoing of the heart in heaven. Not that worship for us now is not true, for it is the greatest privilege into which the Christian is brought while on earth. A Christian thus anticipates the mind and employment of heaven. He will still be a worshipper when glorified; but he is a worshipper here, for the hour “now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him.”

Nevertheless, before the soul can worship in anything that could be said to be the power of the Spirit, prayer is the early and habitual resource day by day; and after Christian worship is entered into, real prayer abides and always must be for our wants and desires here below.

The disciples felt their need of prayer. They were stirred up to it by the fact that John taught his disciples to pray. They were born of God; but for all that, they lacked power for prayer, their souls were feeble in it. “And it came to pass that as he was praying in a certain place.” No one was so prayerful, so dependent on His God and Father as Jesus; nor does any evangelist present this so much as Luke, nor consequently under so many different circumstances. “When he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, [Our] Father [which art in heaven], Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. [Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.] Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation [; but deliver us from evil].” (Ver. 1-4.)

I fully believe that this is the same prayer substantially that we have in Matthew, at the very same time and place. Luke does not adhere to the mere historic sequence of events any more than Matthew. But there is this difference in the way in which Luke and Matthew relate facts or instructions of the Lord: Matthew puts what our Lord says in a certain dispensational order, leaving out the occasions that drew them forth; Luke puts His instructions in their moral order with the facts they illustrate. Thus Luke introduces prayer at this point, after hearing the word of Jesus; because the divine word is what brings the knowledge of Jesus into the soul, as prayer is the outgoing of heart to Him who has given and shown us mercy and revealed it to us in His word. A man must believe before he prays. “How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?” None can believe without the word of God; but when one has received the word of God, if it be only to plow up the conscience and attract the heart, one prays.

Thus the disciples at this time feel their need of prayer and the Lord teaches them how to pray. The Lord did not give them prayers suitable to the new position and circumstances they would be brought into after redemption. If He had descanted in prayer about the church, the body of Christ, or the working of the Spirit by the members of that body, it would have been utterly unintelligible to them. The prayers that we have of Paul afterward could not have suited the condition of the

disciples then, because they were not yet in any such standing. The conduct that would suit a married woman with her husband, &c., would be unbecoming in one who was still unmarried. For a woman who is only affianced to be praying about the children she was going to have when she might never have any, or about the household when the wedding-day might never come, would be most evidently out of season. The Lord Jesus perfectly suited what He said to the condition and circumstances of those whom He addressed. The disciples had not received, though quickened of the Holy Ghost, the indwelling Spirit in the way they were going to have Him; consequently they could not pray as on that ground. It is a blunder to suppose that the gift of the Holy Ghost is conversion. When the Lord Jesus went to heaven, He sent down the Holy Ghost. The saints of the Old Testament were converted, but they had not the Holy Ghost as all have who rest on redemption since Pentecost. The disciples wanted to know how to pray, and the Lord gave them a prayer suited to their then circumstances. Only the Spirit of God has given a difference between the form in Matthew and in Luke. One is as divinely inspired as the other; nothing can be more perfect than both are. The Gospels are absolutely perfect, each for its own object, and we need them all. The difference of their design affects the prayer, as it does everything else.

Our Lord then directs the disciples to their Father. This is the first and very significant word of the prayer. When believers in addressing God now use the titles of Jehovah or Almighty God, do they not forget that they are Christians? When God was intelligently addressed as Almighty, it was in the days of Abraham and the patriarchs. They were the days of promise. Afterward, when the nation of Israel was called out and put under law, it was as Jehovah-God that He was known. Now it is as Father that the Christian knows Him. (See 2 Cor. 6) Luke says simply, “Father” (not “Our Father which art in heaven,” as Matthew has it).

The first petition is, “Hallowed be thy name.” The desire is that in every case the heart might make God its object; as we hear in James, “the wisdom that cometh down from above is first pure, then peaceable.” It first judges by God, and seeks the glory of God. “Hallowed be thy name.” Such is and ought to be the prime desire of the renewed mind, that the Father's name should be sanctified in everything. All else must yield to this. “Hallowed be thy name.”

The next petition is that His kingdom should come. It is not the kingdom of the Son of man, the kingdom of Christ, that is spoken of here, but the Father's kingdom. It is not My kingdom come, but “thy kingdom come.” The Father's kingdom is distinguished from the Son of man's kingdom. It is the sphere in which the heavenly saints will shine as the sun. The Son of man's kingdom is the sphere in which all people, nations, and languages shall serve Him, and out of which the angels of His power shall cast all scandals. (Matt. 13) Heaven and earth will be both put under the Lord Jesus when He comes, and both will constitute the kingdom of God. But the Father's kingdom is the upper department, and the Son of man's kingdom is the lower one. (Compare John 3:3, 12.) The Lord teaches them to pray for the Father's kingdom. This is blessed and perfect. The Son would teach the children of the Father to wait with reverence and delight for the Father's glory. This was the animating spring of every thought and feeling of His own heart. But the Father's kingdom is not all the scene of glory.

Hence He adds elsewhere, “Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.” Though left out of Luke by excellent authority, it is undoubtedly read in the Gospel of Matthew, because the future kingdom will bring in the earth as well as heaven. This confirms the distinction between the

Father's kingdom and the Son's. Not merely shall heaven be blessed, but the earth. All is to be made subject in fact as all is put under His feet in title. The will of God is that all should bow to the Son, and that the crucified One should be exalted. The Son loved to exalt and did exalt the Father at all cost; the Father will accomplish His purpose 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.

Then comes a petition expressive of dependence on God for our ordinary need. “Give us day by day our daily bread.” It takes up the pure and simple need of the body. The word “daily” is a very imperfect expression in English of the original term. ■πιο■σιος really means our “sufficient” bread, (seemingly a word expressly formed for this idea in contrast with superfluity). One cannot without slighting the wisdom of the Lord ask for more than sufficiency. One ought not to look for more even from the Lord of heaven and earth. He bids me ask for bread enough for each day's wants. Yet is it thoroughly the spirit of the One who, after He had fed five thousand men with the five loaves and the two fishes, bade the disciples gather up the fragments which remained that nothing might be lost. And then and thus twelve baskets were in fact filled. How easy it might have seemed for Him by whom all was supplied to have exerted His power afresh! He would not have one atom to be thrown away because He had unlimited power. What a lesson for us!

Next comes the need of the soul. “Forgive us our sins.” It is not merely “our debts” (as in Matt. 6): a Jew would understand this; but Luke, writing particularly for Gentiles, tells the disciples to say, “Forgive us our sins.” This does not refer to a sinner's forgiveness, when he first comes to the knowledge of the Lord, but to the disciple under the daily government of his Father. How misleading then it is to make an unconverted person take the ground of asking forgiveness like a child of God! Under the gospel the way for the unconverted to receive the remission of sins is by faith in the blood of Jesus, by receiving the gospel itself. The common use of it is to confound all truth by mixing up all, the world and children of God, as if they were alike disciples drawing near and asking forgiveness for their daily sins. The forgiveness of a child is all that is spoken of here, the removal of what hinders communion, not that which the gospel publishes to the most guilty that believe in the Savior and Lord, but the daily pardon which the believer needs. It is therefore the habitual need of the soul, just as the daily bread was that of the body. “For we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.” This is remarkable, because it evidently supposes one who has a forgiving spirit already, and no one is so really except he who is forgiven by the grace of God. And God does hold His children to this. How can a man who does not forgive another pretend to enjoy the forgiveness of his own sins before God? There is a righteous government on our Father's part, and the particular sin which grieves the Lord is not forgiven till we confess it to Him. “If ye do not forgive,” says our Lord in Mark 11, “neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.” It is the cherishing a spirit entirely antagonistic to the Spirit of the Lord. If there were a child in a family going on in a course of self-will, there would be a bar for the time to mutual good feeling. So with God our Father; if there were a persistently bad spirit towards another, so long the Father does not forgive as a question of communion and of daily intercourse with Himself. It ruins the intelligence of scripture to make it all a question of eternity. In the Epistles of the New Testament the remedy or duty in such circumstances takes the form, not so much of asking forgiveness, but of confession, which goes far deeper. To ask for forgiveness is easy enough and quickly done (as you may learn from your child); to confess one's fault in all its gravity is a very

humiliating process, and if not with a view to forgiveness and the restoration of communion, it is a mockery of God. To confess, to judge oneself, is therefore far beyond asking forgiveness.

The last clause here should be, “and lead us not into temptation,” The heart, knowing its own weakness, does spread its desire before the Lord; it feels the need of being kept, not of being put to the proof. “Deliver us from evil” is left out in the most ancient copies. The only right and true way of understanding the mind of God and the best homage to scripture is always and only to cleave to that which is undoubtedly of Himself. This is not to take away anything from scripture; it is to lay aside what is not scripture. We have these words quite rightly in Matthew besides: we gain by their omission here instead of losing. The question arises, Why should it be given in Matthew and omitted here? “Deliver us from evil” refers, I believe, to the evil one and the exhibition of his power, which a Jew ought always to have before him, that tremendous hour which will be allowed as a final retribution on the nation, before they are delivered for the reign of Christ. As Luke had the Gentiles in view, this was naturally and wisely left out. Deliverance from this scourge would have been less felt by them, and hardly intelligible; as the earthly millennial portion disappears for a similar reason. What is general and moral abides here.

Notes on Luke 11:5-13

The Lord here enforces prayer, and this on considerations drawn (as often in Luke) from the human heart, as showing still more powerfully what God feels in answer to the earnestness of men.

“He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as be needeth.” The time may seem ever so inopportune, but although a man may not for friendship's sake listen to him who requests the loan of bread, he would rather rise and give than expose himself to trouble. Every one knows that such is apt to be the way of a man with the neighbor who is bold enough to press. He might be ever so much annoyed at the importunate suitor, but still to avoid the trouble of a continued appeal at his door, he yields. At least such is an ordinary case: “Because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.”

If such is the way of selfish ease-loving man, how much more will the God of all grace hearken to those who cry to Him? He is not weary; He never slumbers nor sleeps; He is full of goodness and compassionate care. “I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” —an evident climax, all tending to urgency of supplication before God: not as if God needed it, but man does; and God values the earnestness of man's heart, although His own is open to the cry of want or distress from the very first. But we know that there are hindrances from other causes, and that the Lord has Himself told us of a kind (speaking of evil spirits) that goes not forth but by prayer and fasting. There we have the highest degree of the soul's abstraction from all else, giving itself up to God's power in order to defeat the devil. “For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” There is always in Luke not only an appeal to the feelings of the heart, and man's own concession of what even he would do in order to illustrate the ways of God, infinitely more admirable and excellent, but there is also a comprehensiveness which goes far beyond the narrow bounds of Israel. “Every one that asketh receiveth.” Thus we have here the call to importunity of prayer, and the certainty of God's answer.

But this is again enforced on the ground of the relationship of a child with a father. “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?” How contrary to the feelings of a parent, to mock when he affects to give! to give what is injurious instead of what is good! Impossible that a father, speaking now ordinarily of any father, would be guilty of such ways. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” In the Gospel of Matthew it is “Give

good things to them that ask him.”

But Luke goes farther, and shows us not, it is true, the person of the Comforter, as in the Gospel of John, but certainly the Holy Spirit as characterizing the gift of the Father's love to those who ask Him. For we must remember that the disciples had not yet the Holy Spirit. They were born of the Spirit, but this is a very different thing from enjoying the gift of the Spirit. To have the Holy Ghost given is over and above conversion or new birth; it is not life, but power; a privilege superadded to the possession of the new nature, and the chief or only means of enjoying God according to all the instincts of that nature, and consequently of entering into His wisdom in the word of God. This is the richest distinctive gift of Christianity on earth, as Christ on high, the Head to whom we are united as His body, is the main heavenly characteristic. Neither of these privileges was true as yet; no one had ever enjoyed them since the beginning of the world. The disciples were told then and encouraged to ask their heavenly Father, who would surely give the Holy Spirit to those who asked Him. The disciples accordingly continued in prayer, as we know from Acts 1; so that even after the Lord died and rose they had not received the Holy Spirit according to this word; they were still expecting. Yet they had received the Spirit as life more abundantly, as the power of His resurrection life; but the gift of the Spirit is something more. It was the indwelling of the Spirit of God, who would also act in various gifts in the members and, above all, in baptizing them into one body. All this was accomplished, but not before Pentecost. They were therefore to ask their heavenly Father, and so they did; and the Holy Spirit of promise was given according to the Savior's word.

There may be cases still, I cannot but think, where it would be right thus to ask our Father. This would be where souls are, like the disciples, converted, but who have not yet submitted to the righteousness of God—who do not yet consciously rest on redemption. In such a state it would be hazardous to say they had received the Holy Ghost while they do not enjoy peace with God. When there is a simple rest by faith on the great work of the Lord Jesus, and not merely faith in His person, then the Holy Ghost is given. Where the blood was put the oil followed, according to the types of Leviticus.

Chapter 164

Notes on Luke 11:14-26

There is great care in this gospel to show the connection of Satan with men; just as we have seen the privilege of the believer in the possession of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God is the power of communion for the new man, for those that are born of God. So Satan is pleased to fill with the power of the demon the old nature of man, in certain cases where God permits him; and the Lord shows the link between the demon and the sickness, weakness, or other malady of body or mind, as we find here of the dumb man: “And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.” It is evident from this that what produced the lack of speech was not physical infirmity, but the demon that dwelt in the man. Directly the demon left, he that had been dumb spake. What the Lord was occupied with here below was in giving a specimen of that which will characterize the world to come. The powers that He exercised, as others afterward in virtue of His name, were “the powers of the world [or age] to come,” as they are called in Hebrews. The millennial age will thus be the full display of the defeat of Satan, to the glory of God, and this in and by man. The Lord's curing of bodily diseases, and casting out of demons, was a partial exhibition of what will be public and universal in that day.

“The people wondered” on this occasion; but the spirit of unbelief is stronger than the power of evidences. Hence, “some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.” We must distinguish between the instruments of Satan's power, and the devil himself. The word “devils” confounds the two things. It would be better to say “demons.” “He casteth out demons through Beelzebub the chief of the demons.” Others did not go quite so far as this; but still, “tempting, they sought of him a sign from heaven.” Satan does not lead all in the same way, but he suits his action to the flesh of each. Some men are violent in their unbelief, while others are more religious. Some “tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.” They were not content with what God had given, though there could be no external proof more convincing than the expulsion of Satan's power. Hence this was strongly marked at the starting-point of the Lord's ministry in this gospel as well as Mark's. So it was throughout. The Lord, answering their unbelieving thoughts, says, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.” It would be suicidal for Satan to undermine his own influence. “If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils (demons) through Beelzebub.”

But there is more to be noticed. God had before this occasionally given power to Jews to cast out demons. Faith is always honored of God; and on the darkest day the Lord did not fail to keep up as it were the holy fire, that His light should not absolutely go out on the earth. “And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.” No unbelief on their part ever irritated the Lord. Far from this, He could calmly acknowledge what had been of God among them, though this in no way hindered them from denying God Himself present among men. “But if I with the finger of God cast out demons, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.”

This is an expression of no small importance, “the kingdom of God is come upon you.” In another sense it might be said that the kingdom of God was nigh. Here it is said to be come, because Christ was there. Christ brought, as it were, the kingdom of God in His own person. All others require the kingdom of God to come, for them to be in the kingdom; but Christ, being a divine person, brought that kingdom in Himself, displaying it by His own power, manifestly such by the overthrow of Satan, by casting out demons. And yet man was blind, more guiltily so than the poor soul before us was, who could not through his dumbness speak the praises of God. For here, when God had proved His power, they were as blind as ever, they could not see God in it or rather in Jesus.

When the kingdom of heaven is spoken of, it is never said to be come. It could not be said according to scripture phrase, the kingdom of heaven is come unto you. Thus “the kingdom of heaven” and “the kingdom of God” are not quite identical. They agree so far that what in one gospel is called the kingdom of heaven is called in another gospel the kingdom of God. Matthew alone speaks of “the kingdom of heaven,” as Mark, Luke, and John do of “the kingdom of God.” But what is in Matthew called “kingdom of heaven” is called in the other gospels “kingdom of God,” of which last Matthew himself speaks in a few passages. The difference is this; that the kingdom of heaven always supposes a change of dispensation consequent on the Savior's having taken His place above. He may by and by bring His power below, but He must have come from heaven to bring in the kingdom of heaven. Hence in the future to establish it in power and glory, it is the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven who receives that kingdom and makes it good over all the earth.

The kingdom of heaven never means heaven itself; but rather the rule of the heavens over the earth. When the actual departure on high of the Lord Jesus is spoken of it is always said to be into heaven, and not into the kingdom of heaven. When the Lord then was here below, and manifested His power over Satan, it was the kingdom of God: it could be so called because the king—the power of God—was there. So here in this place He, by the power of God casting out demons, proved that the kingdom of God was come. What better proof could be asked? Man was totally insufficient for such a work; others might have done so in special answer to prayer. God is always superior to the devil, and it was important that He should prove this from time to time in expelling demons by the sons of Israel who possessed the place of relationship to God that no other people had. But in the Lord's case it was not occasional, exceptional, or partial, but uniform and universal: even where the disciples themselves using His name failed to cast them out, He always did it with a word. The kingdom of God therefore was come as a witness of His power, not yet as a state and sphere of manifestation. Both morally and in power the kingdom of God was come in Him who bound the strong man and stripped him of his goods.

And this leads me to another remark. The apostle Paul frequently speaks of the kingdom of God, not as a dispensation, but as a moral display. He says that “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” He says too that “the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.” You could not say “the kingdom of heaven” in these cases. Thus we see the reason why Luke particularly can speak of the kingdom of God, for he is the evangelist that dwells on the moral side more than any other. Hence too there is a stronger link between his language and that of Paul than any other two writers of the New Testament.

Then the Lord introduces a remarkable figure. “When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted and divideth his spoils.” This was going on then. If Satan was the strong man in the figure, Jesus was now stripping him of his goods and dividing his spoils. The whole ministry of Jesus was the evidence of a power superior to Satan in the world. It is true that this did not deliver, because it did not touch the judgment of God. It was present and not eternal deliverance. It was the overthrow of Satan, not the satisfaction of God. Sin could not yet have been abolished, and judgment must still have remained. No grace, nor power, nor ministry can take away sin, nothing but the sacrifice of Himself. That infinitely deeper question was behind, and was settled not in the life of Jesus, but in His atoning death on the cross. Here He merely speaks of the power then present by a living Christ, which did deliver men from the oppression of Satan, as far as this life was concerned in the world; but not for eternity, not before God. This side of the cross, the victorious power of Christ over Satan in this life, for the earth, has been greatly forgotten in Christendom; and the more so because they bring in the living power of Christ to supplement His death for righteousness and atonement. They have made both life and death necessary for settling the question of a guilty soul for eternity. Consequently they have in practice seen little more than this, forgetting the power of Satan on the one hand, and the power of the Spirit on the other, except in a superstitious way, which only brings the truth into disrepute. These antagonistic realities have been lost sight of; and the grand witness is overlooked that the Lord was giving of a future deliverance of man from Satan's power when His kingdom will be, not merely in the Spirit's power, but in manifestation. All this has well nigh dropped out of Christendom. The Jews were feeble about eternal deliverance, but held fast the hope of the kingdom, of blessing in the earth and world by the Messiah, when the power of the serpent would be evidently broken.

Then we find a most solemn principle in verse 23. “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.” The presence of Christ brought this out, and more particularly when He was being rejected. When Christ was acceptable, there was no moral test; but when public opinion was universally against Him, and it was evident that to follow Christ was to be slighted by the great and wise, then it proved the strongest criterion. So the Lord now says, “He that is not with me is against me.” If I am not with Him, I am against Him. The more He is rejected, the more I must throw in my lot with Him. And this is a test not only for one's person, but also for one's work, as it is added here, “He that gathereth not with me scattereth."The first is more particularly true for the unconverted man, and the second for the converted who is worldly in his work. A man might himself be really with Christ, but yet in his labors he might build or prop up what is of the world. Such a person, no matter what the apparent effects may be, may become the most popular of preachers, and produce wide-spread effects, philanthropic and religions; but “he that gathereth not with me scattereth,” says the Lord. There is no scattering so real in the sight of God as the gathering of Christians on false principles. It is worse than if they were not gathered at all. There is a deeper hindrance to the truth, because there is a spirit of party and denomination that is necessarily hostile to Christ. A false gathering-point substitutes another center for Christ, and consequently makes greater confusion. “He that gathereth not with me scattereth.”

Then we find the picture of the unclean spirit, that is, the spirit of idolatry. It had once possessed the Jewish nation; but here it is applied in the case, not merely of a nation, but of an individual. It

acquires a more moral shape than in the Gospel of Matthew, where it is dispensational. “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.” A person might, through evidence and convictions of one sort or another profess to follow Christ, and be outwardly with Him. But the mere absence of outward evil will never bring a soul to God. God Himself must be known, and Jesus Himself received, not merely the unclean spirit be gone out. A man may leave off evil of a gross kind, he may give up false religion, or, as in this case, idolatry; but all this does not consecrate a man. It is the presence of God in possession of a soul—it is the having a new nature, and not merely the absence of this or that evil—that determines the matter. The unclean spirit can return to the house unless it is already occupied by the power of God's Spirit, which alone effectually shuts Satan out. “And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.” No doubt, as compared with heathenism there is the absence of much that is abominable and offensive. Christian truth is owned; and the unclean spirit, therefore, finds the house, when he returns, swept and garnished. This will be true in Christendom, as it may be also in an individual. After a person has through the outward influence of Christ laid aside evil, the power of Satan gathers fresh fuel; and the man falls into worse evil than if he had never professed His name at all. It is not a simple return to what he was, nor merely that the old evil re-asserts its energy, but there is a fresh and complete torrent of evil, a new and worse power of the enemy, that takes possession of the soul; and “the last state of that man is worse than the first.” An apostate is the most hopeless of all evil men. So it will be with the Jew and so with Christendom; it is the same thing with any man at any time in these circumstances. There is nothing for anyone except cleaving to the name of the Lord. Nor is it only a question of glorifying the Lord but of positive necessity for his own soul.

Notes on Luke 11:27-36

The power that delivers a man's body, in this respect breaking the thralldom of Satan, however true, is eclipsed by that which is still more precious. Nevertheless men could not but feel the homage that was due to power, and this so beneficent. “And it came to pass as he spice these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.” This gave the Lord occasion to show what was far better. “But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.” Without denying the value of divine power in such a world as this, yet, said our Lord, “rather blessed are they that bear the word of God and keep it.” The goodness of God shown in nature, for which (though not alone) the Jews were called to wait, would give place to a superior order of blessing. The very badness of the world's state and of men upon it is the occasion for God to bring in what never passes away, and is destined to endure when the world is gone. There is nothing here below that introduces the eternal like the word of God. Power, even were it as great as that which Jesus wielded over man or the enemy, is but for a time in its effects; but “he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” And “he that believeth hath everlasting life.” “Rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.” The word of God is the link between man on earth and God above; it is the seed of the incorruptible life, “which liveth and abideth forever.”

Accordingly here again man is put to the proof. He had been already tested by power, and he that could impute that which cast out Satan to Satan himself was self-condemned. It would make Satan more foolish than the most foolish man; for it is a universal principle that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. Can it be thought that Satan deliberately destroys his own kingdom and himself? Is he really suicidal? The Jews then show to what they were fallen when they imputed to Satan the power that cast out demons.

And now what became of the Jews who heard the word of God and did not keep it? Nothing more terrible.

“When the people,” therefore, “were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it but the sign of Jonas the prophet.” Instead of keeping the word of God, they were seeking outward tokens. They wanted something visible to their senses, an object tangible in their midst, not only present but earthly and suited to the world. “But there shall no sign be given it but the sign of Jonas the prophet.” The allusion is to one who prophesied in Israel, but who was sent to the Gentiles—to the Ninevites. “For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.” He too the rejected Messiah would take the place of Son of man, despised and rejected of men.

But more than this: a queen of the south and men of Nineveh are brought before us in another way to condemn the Jews of that day. “A queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” This showed her earnestness of purpose to bear the wisdom of Solomon. The wise and wealthy son of David was not the vessel

of the word of God in his ordinary speech as the Lord Jesus was: yet she came without a single miracle to attract her, without a sign to guide or confirm, and heard the wisdom of Solomon: “and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” Then, again, men of Nineveh themselves, that great city which had been given up to destruction at last— “men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonas.” They were willing to own their own evil, their sinfulness, their forgetful ignorance of God, and this at the preaching of Jonas—a prophet comparatively unfaithful, who strove to escape from the mission on which God sent him: “and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.” But where were the men of this generation, and what? Did they repent? No more did they repent than they chewed what was seen in a queen of the south—earnestness of heart in listening to the wise man of her day. Thus there was a double testimony against them; Gentiles, high or low, at one time or another, rose up to condemn the men of Jerusalem.

Then the Lord brings out another truth, namely, that the fault lay not in the want of signs any more than in the display of power (for we have seen the contrary), but in the state of the heart. That is the only reason why man does not rejoice in, or keep, the word of God; it is because his heart is not right with God. No person would prefer darkness to light or pleasure to the word of God unless the heart were wrong. “No man when he hath lighted a candle putteth it in a secret place, neither under the bushel (or corn-measure), but on the lampstand, that they which enter in may see the light.” So it was in the ways of God. There was no defect in His presentation.

The Light was come, and God set it in a due and commanding position, that all who saw it might be profited. Never was there one that held forth the light of God as Jesus did. He never wavered, for He was the holy One, the undefiled, separate from sinners. There was no fault therefore to be found with the medium; Jesus not only chewed perfect light in what He said, but was it in Himself. All was perfection in Him; yet how had men treated it? Alas! there are other conditions necessary. “The lamp of the body is thine eye: therefore, when thine eye is single, thy own body also is light; but when it is evil, thy body also is dark.” Here we reach so far what man is. It is not here as in John, that Christ is the Light; there we see His personal glory.

But Luke always brings in man's state, or moral condition. “The lamp of thy body is the eye.” Light alone outside does not enable a man to see. If the eye, physically, is powerless, the light makes no impression. As in John the light may be ever so true, but according to Luke the eye also enters the account; and by nature it is evil and only so. It is not only Christ as light that is wanted. Eyes to see must be given; its actual state must be considered. “Therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is light.” It is a question here of moral purpose. If there be no object to divide the heart's attention; if Christ fills the field of vision, the whole body is light. “But when thine eye is evil, thy body also is dark.” And is there not evil in looking to other objects from Christ, in turning away from the only One that is worthy? “When thine eye is evil, thy body also is dark. Take heed therefore that the light that is in thee be not darkness.” What darkness is comparable to it? This is moral darkness, and fatal to the soul which can see nothing in Christ, or if it seem to see, it is evidently indifferent to Christ, indifferent not to one's own soul alone, but to the eternal truth of God. The eye is evil, the body therefore is dark indeed.

“Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.” Such is the end of a carelessness and unfaithfulness to truth. This was becoming the confirmed history of Israel. They

bad, as compared with the Gentiles, possessed divine light; but “Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness.” It was to the last degree becoming their fixed state. They were first indifferent to Christ; finally, they would reject Him to the uttermost—then it would be the darkness of death. “If thy whole body therefore is light, not having any part dark, the whole shall be light, as when the lamp lighteth thee with its brightness.” Thus when one has light for oneself, it becomes the means of light for others. In divine things you cannot separate power from testimony to the glory of God for others.

Chapter 166

Brief Thoughts on Malachi

The captivity did not purify Israel. The returned captives deny the love and despise the judgment of the Lord. See chapter 1:2; 2:17.

The unclean spirit went out; but the house was not the Lord's.

But there is a remnant, informal, spiritual, remembered now, to be distinguished hereafter.

They are exhorted to hold by the word. They are promised the judgment of the evil, and a new dispensation. They are not promised present recovery of David's throne or deliverance from the Gentiles.

So the Reformation in Christendom: the unclean spirit went out; but the house was not the Lord's.

Apostles contemplate an informal remnant, promise judgment and a new thing, but hold out no present recovery. See 2 Tim. 2 Peter, Jude, Rev. 2; 3

Malachi's remnant were found by Jesus as Malachi left them. (See Luke 1; 2) So will the coming of the Lord find the saints as left by the apostles in the epistles.

Notes on Matthew 13

In these parables we have the character and importance of the word shown, and its effects. The object of revealing truth in this manner is made known to us by the Lord in His answer to the disciples, saying, “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” Parables, then, we find, unfold the word to those who already know Jesus; and they are spoken consequent upon the unbelief of the Jewish people, amongst whom the Lord had previously ministered, and cast out devils, and healed the sick, and who then, in the very principle of apostasy, had asked a sign. The character of this evil and adulterous generation is spoken of as having corrupted themselves; their spot is not the spot of God's children; they are a froward generation, children in whom is no faith; and here it is as though He were just declaring, “I will hide my face from them, and see what their end will be.” And this is the reason why He speaks in parables. The spirit of unbelief was clearly developed in the Jews after His taking the utmost possible pains with them, and then He hides His face from them, telling them their condition is this— “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.” (Matt. 13:43-45.) Having seen this then, we see that the parables are the unfolding of mysteries to those who believe.

The Lord, as the Apostle of our profession at His first coming, spoke the word of God; and when He returns to judge the world, He will judge by the word which He has spoken, as He says, “The word that I have spoken the same shall judge you.”

The Lord's testimony was of grace, expressive of all that God was in grace to sinners. And when He comes again, He will come judging by it. Having given the mind of God, He returns to heaven, and then He returns as King to judge by the word which He had spoken. In the first of these parables, we find the Lord going forth sowing the seed. I would speak of the effect and operation of this.

The last six parables have a very distinct character.

The first three unfold what goes on in the world consequent upon the sowing of the seed; and the last three the mind of Christ internally as regards the effect.

First we have the seed sown in the field, and parallel to this is the field bought for the sake of the prize which He knew to be in it.

The grain of mustard-seed becoming a tree in which the birds of the air lodge, is the indiscriminate place of shelter afforded by the organization of professed doctrine; on the other hand, we have the pearl of great price, and understood in its value by a merchantman; here we find the spiritual understanding of Christ, and what every Christian has in his measure.

The leaven, which is a corrupt and a hidden thing, leavens the whole three measures of meal, that is, a given part is filled with it. The whole from the field is gathered, and the whole of the net is drawn to shore, and then comes the separation.

We always find, in the interpretation of parables and symbols, more is included than the parable or symbol states.

So here, the explanation states what the Son of man should do when the angels are sent forth. And here we get the Lord's judgment consequent upon the effects of the seed sown and that which follows—even that all things that offend and do iniquity shall be gathered out of His kingdom and cast into a furnace of fire, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth; and then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The interpretation here embraces more, and carries us farther than the parable itself. So in Dan. 7. We have first a vision declaring the power of four beasts, and of a little horn which should come out of them; then their destruction, and the setting up of another kingdom; but it is in the interpretation, in verses 18 and 22, that we learn that the saints of the Most High shall possess that kingdom.

These interpretations carry out the child of God into the next dispensation. In the parable of the tares, the servants ask if they shall gather them out; that is now, at this present time; but the interpretation shows us what takes place consequent upon the time which the parable describes. Christ came into the world and sowed wheat, the devil sowed tares; this is not simply unconverted men, but the operation of Satan to injure and mar the work of God. There were unconverted men before Christ came, and Satan presented adequate temptation to man's pride, covetousness, and self-esteem to guide them to his principles; and this is the wise man of the world. But there is another thing now. Satan comes to introduce mischief where God had introduced good. The world is not now in its natural state. Jesus as the Apostle of our profession has come and sown good seed; but while men slept, the enemy has come in upon this, and sown tares to injure and corrupt the profession of the Church. It may be great and flourishing in appearance as the tree; it may fill the three measures of meal as the leaven; but it is a corrupt thing.

But to confine myself to the parable of the tares: it is not only the weeds of the field, i.e., natural evil, but the subtle evil of the tares growing up to a harvest of judgment—that is the church nominally; but where were they to be let grow together with the wheat? In the world. There is not to be the judicial process of excision here. The Son of man sows; the Son of man, as king, gathers out of His kingdom all things that offend and do iniquity; but what is this but the condemnation of a judicial process of excision in the world now by the saints? This is not to be executed until He comes.

I take notice in passing that this has nothing to do with discipline, because this is exercised in the Church, on the children, or on those we hope to be such; while the proposed excision was to be exercised on the tares—those known to be tares (that is, discerned iniquity).

The parable of the net cast into the sea comes within the class which is the subject of the spiritual apprehension of disciples only, and is addressed only to them, its very subject being within the scope of their understanding only; while on the other side it presents the gathering of a company out of the world, in which good and bad are alike found, the process on which is the subject of their occupation and apprehension, and which the fishermen who draw the net carry on and not the

angels.

Note here, the servants or the fishermen are not occupied with the bad. Extermination from the world was not their business. Here the dealing with good is the subject of the parable; the explanation determines the portion of the bad.

So the tares are gathered into bundles to be burned; and before they are cast into the furnace of fire, the wheat is gathered into His barn. We find in this the separation of the saints from the evil, and not the carrying into effect the judgment of the wicked; the good are gathered previous to the judgment upon the ungodly. In the parable, we find they are told to gather together the tares in bundles ready for the burning, but they are not told to burn them; then the wheat is to be gathered into a barn, a place of security. But in the explanation, there is the gathering out of all things that offend and do iniquity, and, they are cast into the furnace of fire; and then the righteous (before gathered into the barn) shall shine forth in the kingdom of their Father.

The principles of iniquity and the providence of God now go on together. First, the tares are gathered, and then the wheat; then the tares are judged and the good shine forth—that is, first of all, we have the practical separation, the providential gathering of the wheat out of the way of judgment into the barn, and then the actual judgment of the tares, and, consequent upon that, the wheat shines forth. When the fish are separated we have (not the good shining forth in glory, but) the good gathered into vessels, and then the bad destroyed.

In this parable of the tares we find Satan was waking, and men were sleeping, and the effect produced is the mixture of the evil and the good; and this is now the work of the devil, mixing evil with good in this world; and we can still say “an enemy hath done this.” Competence to remedy it is another thing. But let us settle this as a first principle—that if we see evil and good mixed in the profession of Christianity, this is the work of Satan; and, remember, the tares are not simply unconverted men—there were plenty before the Lord came, but the tares are the work of Satan consequent upon His coming.

Is the thing the Lord proposes, in sowing the seed, to set the world right? No; for the servants ask, Are we to root out the tares? and the answer is, No, they are to grow till the harvest. In the world the process of mixture will go on till then, when the Lord will interfere Himself. Here then we have the express revelation that the idea of setting the world right by the word comes not from a spiritual understanding; but the Lord's answer to whence these things came, and whither they should be, is, I have bought the world for the sake of the treasure that is in it; and the saints learn to their comfort, that the good are gathered into vessels while on the shore, that is, while they are practically together, and of course while they have to contend with open and subtle evil; and this we must expect in the world, until He gathers out of His kingdom all things that offend and do iniquity.

In the practical application of this, it is of great importance to see that the mixing anything with God's wheat is sanctioning the iniquity of the world. If I see anything with the spirit of the world, or the power of it stamped upon it, I see a plant which is not of the Lord's planting; and if I see this mixed with Christianity, that which is of Christ, and that which is not of Christ, I say, “an enemy hath done this.” We have been slumbering, but the enemy was awake. The spirit of a believer necessarily involves total separation from the world, for where there is a spirit to join the world,

there is not the Spirit of God, but the spirit of the world. But this state of things will not go on forever.

I would ask you, dear friends, whether there be in you this recognition of the total separation in spirit which these things mark out to us? If this is not the case, we are either the natural weeds of the field, or what Satan has sown to do mischief. You may be those God will convert, but you are one of these, or you have the principle in your hearts, that the love of the world is enmity against God.

The thing of price to my soul is that Christ is coming. The beauty and glory of Christ is clearly opposed to the things of the world. Are your hearts under the control of the spirit of obedience? or if the Lord were manifested, is it the thing you delight in? Because He will appear the second time without sin unto salvation. And you who love Christ, cannot you discriminate between Christ and this heartless evil world? Have you given up its interests and its intercourse, save in doing good? Can it be that the things by which Satan governs our hearts are topics of mutual interest to Christians and to the world? No. All that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. The world is alienated from God, and if mixed up with the saints, it is “an enemy hath done this.” The saints of God, taught of Christ by the Spirit, know that it is an enemy. May the Lord press its truth, dear friends, on your hearts, that you may be separated from the world. The Lord show you it is impossible to mix these things, and keep you from the wish to do so.

Chapter 168

Reflections on Matthew 14-15

I have been occupied with these chapters; for they occupy evidently a special place between the mysteries of the kingdom on the judicial rejection of the Jews at the end of chapter xii. (which goes on to the end of the age) and the Church and kingdom glory in chapters 16, 17. The contexts are naturally special; for the kingdom is set forth after the ruin of Judaism in chapter 13, and the Church, and glory of the kingdom come after. What is this special place?

It is plain that chapter 13 gives the kingdom of heaven in the peculiar character it assumes when the king is in heaven, not manifested, and, as Mark says, it grows and springs up he seemingly knows not how. What then is brought out between this and the revelation of the Church on earth? It is the actual proof of present rejection and the incapacity of the disciples to avail themselves of His then present power; the moral darkness of the Scribes and Pharisees, the intrinsic falseness of their religious principles, but the disciples really got no farther. The Pharisees were not plants of God's planting at all; the disciples were, blind on many things as they were. The Lord is here getting on strong moral ground—what God has planted, and the human heart being the source of evil. God, not Judaism or tradition, was the spring and guide of good, man's heart only evil.

But Christ, still in His own place, takes only His services in Israel; but He goes where one of the accursed races and of wicked Tyre has access to Him, owning him as Son of David. As such He could not help her. But this brings out what must go beyond these limits—the goodness of God. This, to faith, He could not deny. Thus, while man's heart even in the Jew was only evil, God was—could not but be—good to faith.

But He had not given up Israel, though all this was true; and the hungry multitude of Galilee are again fed, though the disciples are not now called to do it: He takes the loaves and does it Himself. The baskets that contained the remnant are not now the number which is the sign of perfect government in man, but of special or divine perfection—seven, not twelve. It is grace above promise, and not simply divine power able to fulfill it.

This leads me to say a few words more in detail of chapter 14. The work of rejection begins; John is beheaded, and Jesus retires, but only to find a multitude, whom He meets in grace. He then shows Himself as the Jehovah that was to satisfy the poor with bread, let Him be rejected by the nations as He may. He expects the disciples to understand and use this power; but they do not—they judge by sight. “Give ye them to eat.” “We have here but five loaves and two fishes!” Then He sends the disciples away while He is on high, and joins them still in the ship, connected, I apprehend, with Judaism which He had left to cross the world by divine power—our part. But Peter cannot—only but for being helped he was sinking and (like the Jewish remnant) re-enters the ship, but with Christ. The walking on water was in principle Church position, walking simply by faith to meet Jesus, with no known hold, only by faith. When He rejoins the ship, they own Him, not as Messiah in a carnal way and expectation as even the disciples had done, but as Son of God, which was just what the nation would not do, and the disciples practically never did, though God taught individuals so. The country of Gennesaret which once rejected Him now receives Him with

open arms. It is a divine person then here when not only Israel but the disciples could not own or at any rate profit by His manifestation to Israel.

We have then, as noted above, the moral judgment of Israel's state and of their teachers; but again the disciples are without understanding. Yet in this very chapter, where essential divine principles of truth and grace are brought so clearly out, there is a special recognition of Israel. The Canaanitish woman not only called Him Son of David, but owned Israel as the children and herself as only a dog. The Lord takes this ground, though necessarily owning God to be good to others. And the people glorify the God of Israel.

On the whole we have Israel rejecting the witness of God; Christ present as Immanuel, but the disciples unable to profit by it, left and rejoined; moral principles of man's heart, and God's overflowing goodness; but plants must be of God's planting or rooted up; Israel rejected but owned. Still the Lord distinguished the disciples as possessed of personal faith (save of course Judas)—plants of the Lord's planting; and when He now simply leaves the Pharisees, He appeals to that faith. (Chap. 16) Ignorant as they were of God's ways and incapable of availing themselves of what Christ was, yet the inquiry addressed to their personal faith brings out the answer (given of the Father) of that on which the Church should be built. They cling to Him—to His person when the nation rejected Him, and when even they could not profit rightly by His presence in Israel. But then when Israel was for the time rejected, that person became the foundation of everything, and the Lord (who had put the question to draw out this distinctive faith, however prejudiced and buried in traditions even they were) at once recognizes the direct teaching of the Father. Now Israel was gone, on this the Church would be built. The contrast of verses 1-5, then 6-12, and what then follows, is very striking. Read in verse 18, “And I also say unto thee,” in contrast with or addition to the Father's revelation, and also to Peter's confessing. He had said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Christ says, “Thou art Peter;” but this was the authority, the really divine or divinely given title to give a name. The rest of the verse is a kind of parenthesis. By the revelation of what Christ was by the Father, he partook of the nature of the foundation, as all true believers do, though not distinguished as Peter. But the building of the assembly comes out as Christ's new revelation consequent on the setting aside of all preceding leading up to the Father's revelation of His Son (to Simon), triumphant by His divine person and nature over death, whence Satan's power could not prevail against it, though Israel's (even the disciples') hopes were ended by His death. But the Son of the living God would on this title build a Church over which Hades' gates could have no power to prevail. Not Peter, but Christ builds the Church; but Peter does administer the kingdom. Nothing is said to him as to having anything to do with the Church—save a name, which shows his confession, put him into connection with it. For if the Church was built on that truth, and he had confessed it as taught of God, he was in principle (though the Church was not yet revealed or begun) on the footing of it as to his acknowledgment of Christ. Hence they are charged not to say He is” the Christ.” The Father has revealed Him in another way. The kingdom of heaven Peter was to administer. Every scribe instructed into the kingdom of heaven brings out of his treasure things new and old. The name of Christ on which the Church was built was a wholly new revelation of the Father. So in the manifestation of the kingdom of the Son of man Moses and Elias disappear, the beloved Son in whom the Father was well pleased (not merely a faithful messenger) was to be bead. Now Peter was entrusted with the keys of the kingdom of heaven. What was administered on that ground did not exclude the old things thus. This again, though

given in a voice, was the Father's revelation. Individually, Peter in both cases was as yet fully under the prejudices of a Jew as to the kingdom.

Chapter 169

What Is Ministry?

What about ministry? One is as far from the Establishment and from the denominations on this ground as on that of the unity of the body, while owning that real ministers may be found, even if in a false position. Indeed the two subjects cannot be separated. For all ministry is the exercise of the gifts which are in the members of the one body.

And now I must beg to say, that the denial of this is alas! (for I say it with unfeigned sorrow) true as to the English system. It has a mediatory, absolving priesthood. The deacon cannot say the absolution, the deacon cannot consecrate the sacramental elements. It must be a priest. In the Visitation of the Sick it says, “By his authority committed unto me I absolve thee from all thy sins.” And in the Ordination of the Priest it is said, “Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest! . . . whose sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whose sins ye retain they are retained.” Nor is this for orderly ministry, for the same man as deacon had received authority to preach the word when licensed by the bishop.

Not only so, in the last conference on the Liturgy, the Presbyterians asked that “priest” might be put out, and “minister” used throughout, and it was peremptorily refused. And where the question was of importance on the very point, it was changed from “minister” to “priest,” that there might be no mistake. Where the people are to join, as in the Lord's Prayer, the “Amen” is printed as the prayer; but, as has been carefully noticed by liturgical authorities, in the other prayers it is printed differently, that it may be understood that the priest is to say it for them as a mediator, and they are only to signify their assent by saying, “Amen;” and that it is quite out of place for them to accompany him. The English system makes an infant a member of Christ and a child of God by a sacrament, and has a priest on whom the ordaining prelate professes to confer the Holy Ghost that he may have the power to forgive sins, which accordingly, as the service reads, be does. What more could the most regular mediatorial priest do? The English priest forgives sins: it is the distinctive point of his ordination. The English priest says the prayers alone for the people, who are only allowed to add, “Amen.”

The difference is this—priesthood supposes the other worshippers cannot approach God in the sanctuary themselves (this belonged to Judaism); ministry is the outgoing of God's love to others through the instrumentality, according to their gift, of those who know it. This belongs, I hold, distinctively to Christianity: so far am I from denying ministry.

On the continent of Europe, the liberty of exercising gifts is called universal priesthood, but the term is a blunder. Priests go to God for men, ministers to men from God. However, the principle of a universal title to minister is admitted—in theory, the battle is won on this subject. Competence to do so is a question of gift.

But we have now to inquire what is the scriptural view of ministry and gifts, and whether ordination is required for their exercise. Men in general make the common confusion between gifts which are exercised in the whole church, or in the world to call sinners, and local offices which might be

without any gift at all—though one particular gift was perhaps desirable for one of these offices. A teacher was a teacher everywhere; an elder was an elder only in the city where he was appointed. Let us first take the gifts.

The Lord gave talents to His servants when He went away; the point of faithfulness—of being a good servant—was to use them without any further authorization. The mark of unfaithfulness was the not doing so, through want of confidence in Him who gave them; and looking for some other security and warrant in doing it. Peter tells us, “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Peter 4:10.) If we do not minister the same one to another, we are bad stewards. Paul, in 1 Cor. 12, gives us a full survey of the whole question. The Holy Ghost distributes to every man severally as He will, and the administration resulting from the gift is under the authority of the same Lord. Each member fills up its own place in the body—another very important truth. These gifts are set in the church, are not local; but act as such or such a member in the whole body. He hath set in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles, and so on. Some have disappeared; but all are alike set in the church, the body. A worker of miracles was not such in a particular church; he wrought them where God pleased he should, nor an apostle, nor a prophet, nor a teacher, a bit more. They were alike gifts which were set in the church as a whole. If Apollos taught at Ephesus when there, he taught at Corinth when there—as a prophet wherever he might be. Gifts and ministry were not localized; they were not in a church, but in the church, and so set by God. In Eph. 4 we have a list where, unless we except apostles and prophets (which the same epistle tells us were the foundation), the gifts are the ordinary gifts of ministry. Christ ascended up on high, and gave them (not as local offices, but) for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. In Rom. 12 it is the same thing. “We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching,” &c. They differ according to the grace given, they are in the one body. He who has a gift is to labor in his own gift. There is nothing local—no hint of ordination, nor of anything but the gift. In none of these passages is there a hint of any other authorization than the possession of the gift or talent; in none is there an idea of their being local, or in a church: as a man has received it, he is to minister it, to wait upon it, to trade with his talent, not to go beyond his measure; and in none of them is there a question of elders or local offices. They are exercised in the whole church. This is singular, if the later local system is the true, original, godly order.

But are there not elders and deacons in scripture? There are. In Acts 6 they are not called deacons, but they answer to that office, and the Anglican services treat them as such. Now what are they? They serve tables in contrast with the ministry of the word. “It is not meet,” say the apostles, “that we should leave the word of God to serve tables; wherefore look out from among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” That is, they are appointed to quite another business, in contrast with the ministry of the word. Two out of them, to use the language of Paul, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in Christ Jesus, and set themselves of their own zeal to minister in the synagogues and elsewhere. Philip goes to Samaria, giving up consequently his office” this business” —at

Jerusalem (we afterward find him as an evangelist), and the other five ordained to serve tables we never hear of ministering the word at all. That is, deacons were established over temporal matters that others might be free to minister the word. Two of them, gifted and earnest, set about preaching of their own movement: one certainly leaving his local office for it, and becoming an evangelist; the other sent to heaven, the first and blessed martyr.

Ordination for the ministry of the word we have not found yet, but ordination to serve tables. The next chapter but one gives us the ministry of the word, so as to preclude all idea of ordination: “They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.” Was the whole church ordained? But would God sanction such a proceeding? I read in Acts 11:21: “And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord.” The solitary case of Cornelius, as an all important testimony to the principle (as to the admission of the Gentiles), excepted, the gospel to the Gentiles began and was established by the voluntary zeal of unordained men, who preached everywhere.

As to Paul, who soon appears on the scene, and stamps his character on gospel activity, he is careful to tell us not only that he was not of man, but that he was not by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father. But did not he ordain? For we have no hint of the twelve ordaining any but the seven to serve tables. First, as to the ministry of the word within (for we have seen it was wholly free without), we have that ministry carefully regulated in 1 Corinthians. Every one had a psalm, an interpretation, a doctrine; there was disorder to be corrected. I think it is evident that sometimes two spoke at once. At any rate there was disorder—a disorder impossible if the apostle, who had been some two years at Corinth, had ordained a regular ministry. The disorder was corrected; but how? Not more than two or three at the utmost were to speak, and in succession; that they might all prophesy one by one, that all might learn and all be profited. The prophets were to speak two or three, and the others judge; if they had not the gifts, of course they were to be silent; but of an ordained ministry—not a hint. The use of gifts is ordered for common edification; no symptom of an ordained ministry appears.

If they tell us, All gifts, teachers, pastors, evangelists, have ceased, I answer, from Eph. 4, Then all that was given for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, has ceased. But the apostle says there they were all given till we all come to a full grown man in Christ, not blown about by every wind of doctrine. And the directions for the exercise of gifts exclude the idea of an ordained ministry. The passages I have quoted from 1 Peter 4 and Rom. 12 confirm this same truth.

But do these directions exclude elders? They do not. Elders were local officers appointed by authority; for whom indeed one gift was a desirable qualification, but not indispensable. In Acts 14 the apostle returned to the cities where they had preached, and “ordained them elders in every church.” (Ver. 23.) Gifts, we have seen, are members in the whole body. A real teacher was a teacher everywhere. An elder was chosen for a particular church. I say “chosen,” for the word “ordain” is false. It is never said in scripture that hands were laid on them. I dare say they were, for it was the common sign of imploring and commending to blessing or healing the sick, or conferring gifts, the last an apostolic privilege. The Holy Ghost was given by the laying on of the apostle's hands. But it is never said that hands were laid on elders. I think it is fairly judged to have been so; but scripture is silent as to any direct statement. God knew what the clergy would come to. But

elders were chosen in every church. And the word “chosen” is of importance here; the false translation by “ordain” is a mischievous one. The people did not choose their elders. Barnabas and Paul chose them for them—χειροτον■σαωτες α■το■ς. (Compare 2 Cor. 8:19; Acts 10:41, where “chosen” is the only possible sense.) Elders were local officers.

In Acts 20 we find they were the same as bishops, where again the English translation has hidden the fact of bishops and elders being the same, by translating it (which it has not done in Philip. 1) “overseers,” an excellent word, for it tells us their office very clearly: they were overseers of God's flock, shepherds in this sense, not ministers of the word as such. It was desirable they should be apt to teach—such divinely given power in the word evidently increased their efficiency in oversight. But all did not. They were worthy of double honor, we read in Timothy, specially such as labor in the word and doctrine. But this shows the ministry of the word and doctrine was a distinct thing from their office—very desirable, but not the elder's work. The addition of this made it more efficient. Hence we see that the main qualifications for elders in Timothy and Titus are, gravity, a well ordered family, children in subjection, self-government, qualities for ruling and guiding, and such already demonstrated in practice; so that they should be shown to be fit to guide the church.

Ministers of the word might be young or not; elders and deacons were to be grave, approved, fathers of families. Elders in one place were not elders in another. Titus was to stablish such in every city. Gifts were gifts everywhere. God had set them in the church.

A few collateral proofs may be cited of this scriptural character of the ministry of the word. “Let your women keep silence in the churches.” What can such a direction as this mean if an appointed minister alone were there— “For I suffer not a woman to teach?” Here we have a limit, but not where modern theology has placed it. Again, John, in writing to the elect lady, tells her not to receive those who did not bring sound doctrine as to Christ. The only test of preachers going about was their doctrine. Gaius did well to receive them. Diotrephes did not like it. Ministry then was gift; there was no ordination for it at all: whoever had the gift was bound to use it— “to profit withal.” The word regulated the use of these gifts as to the orderly exercise of them in the assemblies; and he who possessed one exercised it according to these rules everywhere. For there was only one body, and he was that member in it wherever he was. Elders were local officers, overseers, who might, or might not, have gifts.

But was not Timothy ordained? What is the scriptural statement— “the gift that is in thee by the laying on of my hands?” Timothy was pointed out by prophecy, and Paul conferred a gift on him by the laying on of his hands; not an office, but a gift. He had no local office; he might be left at Ephesus, as Titus was in Crete, for special purposes, as the representative of the apostle; but both he and Titus were confidential companions of the apostle: one to leave Crete and come to Nicopolis; and the other seen soon after in the company of the apostle elsewhere. (Acts 20:4; Titus 3:12.) In Timothy's case the presbytery joined in laying on of hands, not to give, but associated with Paul's communicating the gift.

I know that Roman and English prelates profess to give the Holy Ghost; and, as we have seen, not for the ministry of the word, which the deacon was already called to; but to forgive sins as a priest. Are we to believe they have this apostolic power? Did the apostles ever confer it with such an object in view?

If it be asked, Why then have you not elders, official elders, if there were such in the primitive Church, even if gifts be free? the answer is, To have true elders, I must have what the apostle says, “The flock of God over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.” Where is the flock of God, the one flock, so as to have elders of the assembly? In the next place, we have seen, the assembly never chose them, the apostle chose for them; as be left Titus to establish them in every city. The churches could not do it. Nor even do these churches exist now. If a body of Christians choose elders, it is very possible that not one of those the apostles would have chosen—the Holy Ghost would have made overseers—is there amongst them. No assembly can call itself the flock of God in a place, and of no elders chosen by them could it be rightly said, The Holy Ghost has made you overseers. The state of things is different. The external church is in ruins, cut up into a hundred sects, or gorged with error and evil in Popery.

Is there no order, no means of it? God has provided it. First, as to the exercise of gifts, if such there are, the rules are there where needed. In the next place, I find (1 Cor. 16:15, 16) those who had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints; and they were to submit themselves to such, and to all who helped with the apostles and labored. There is a moral action on the souls of those composing the assembly available when official rule does not exist; and it is remarkable there are no elders alluded to in 1 Corinthians, where such disorder was, nor directions to appoint any: the word of God meets the evil. Again, in 1 Thess. 5:12, 13, “Now, we beseech you, brethren, know them which labor among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.” And in Heb. 13:17, “Obey them that have the rule over you [■γουμ■νοι, the same word as “chief men among the brethren” used of Silas] and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.” All this can be practiced when there is no official appointment. For that, apostolic authority is needed, and does not exist, nor the one external body in which it was exercised. This rests on the action of the word in the conscience of those who have to submit. If one comes to me as an official elder, he has no scriptural authority to make good his claim. If I am unruly and unsubdued, those who labor, or indeed any Christian, can bring these passages, and I must submit to the word, or brethren can withdraw themselves from me—have no company with me, that I may be ashamed. This is moral power, not official.

In sum then, ministry flows from gift, and is exercised in the whole church of God; or, if an evangelist, in the world. If a man has the talent, woe be to him if he does not trade with it. What was the one church in the apostles' time is sunk into corruption, or cut up into a multitude of sects—does not exist in its integrity and normal condition. There is no authority competent to choose and establish official elders, nor a flock of God existing to which such official appointment could apply. But there is provision in the word for this ruined state of things wherever two or three are gathered in Christ's name, or for the service of any saints, as one gifted to serve has opportunity in redeeming the time, or to poor sinners as an evangelist.

A clergy is a thing which has no foundation whatever in the word of God, still less a priesthood, save as all Christians are priests. A ministry still exists in definite permanent gifts as pastors, teachers, evangelists; but the increase of the body comes also from the ministration of that which every joint supplieth according to the measure of every part. A gift of wisdom— “the word of wisdom” —may keep peace and happiness among God's people, though perhaps in one who never exercises any public ministration of the word. We can ever count on the faithfulness of the

Lord for present need, and bringing His people to glory.

It was not the details of the sacramental and priestly system which drove me from the Establishment, deadly as they are in their nature, but because I was looking for the body of Christ, which was not there, but in all the parish perhaps not one converted person; and collaterally, because I believed in a divinely appointed ministry. If Paul had come, he could not have preached, he had never been ordained; if a wicked ordained man, he had his title and must be recognized as a minister. The truest minister of Christ unordained could not. It was a system contrary to what I found in scripture.

It was clear, on the other hand, a multitude of sects did not furnish the one body I looked for.

At the beginning, when the Lord added to the church such as should be saved, and during the whole scriptural period practically (though false brethren even crept in), the true body of Christ and the external sacramental body were the same—had the same limits. Soon they became very different, and perplexed good men, as Augustine on one side, who talked of an invisible Church, and Novatian and even Tertullian, who left it—the last for fanaticism.

But scripture warns us that the external sacramental system would get into a state that would call for withdrawal—a form of godliness denying the power, from which we were to turn away. This external church fell into the grossest corruption—beat the men servants and maid servants, and ate and drank with the drunken—became the sure subject of judgment from the Master, whose return they said would be delayed.

The Establishment in its formularies, and Papists and Puseyites in their doctrine, attribute all the blessing and security of the true body to the sacramental body; they make all uncertain of salvation; and sacraments, and these only, certain grace. Dissenters have left on particular points of conscience, and framed (thinking they could) churches for themselves. “Brethren” so-called would own God's church; but, while looking for true unity as of the one body, symbolized in the one loaf, distinguish (as forced and directed to do) the external form, from which, by the apostle's direction, they have turned away; but have not found in churches formed by man either true separation from the world, or what scripture presents as the path of the saint when the corruption had set in. The so-called churches do not own as a duty on earth one body and one Spirit; a body formed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, waiting for God's Son from heaven; and the ministry, as stated in scripture, is not more owned among dissenters than in the Establishment.

May all give heed to the solemn warning, “On thee goodness if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” Has the Christian system continued in the goodness of God, or left its first works?

Chapter 170

Miracles

It is very simple but important to see that miracles do not necessarily imply the setting aside laws. Man produces effects previously unknown by them—change them he cannot. The only difference is that man uses the laws themselves as force to produce the effects; God, the fiat of his will. He may act beyond laws without setting aside any existing one, because he can quicken and create. But the argument that there are laws and God would not set aside his own is perfectly without force

Chapter 171

The New Song (Duplicate)

All is mischief and disturbance; but all is ripening that revolted and apostate material, through the judgment of which the Lord is to take the kingdom. “The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved, he uttered his voice, the earth melted.”

It is as Conqueror the Lord is to take His kingdom by and by, or enter His second sabbath. Of old, the sabbath was the rest of One who bad labored; but the coming sabbath will be the rest of One who has fought a fight and won the day. This “rest that remaineth” will, therefore, be entered by a rougher and more difficult path than the former; for it is to be reached through the afflictions and conflicts which sin has occasioned, and through the judgment of iniquity.

The Lord God of old entered His rest or sabbath as Creator. He had gone through the work of six days, and on the seventh He rested and was refreshed.

The sabbath, we know, has been disturbed and lost through man's sin; but we also know of a coming sabbath, “a rest that remaineth,” as we read.

We might ask, then, in what character will it be entered; or by whom? And all scripture replies, by conquerors. David making way for Solomon is the type of this. Solomon was the peaceful—a name which implies not abstract or mere rest, but rest after conflict or war. It bespeaks triumphant rest; something more than cessation of labor.

So the Lord enters the kingdom as “the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle;” as one fresh in victory, “with dyed garments.” (See Psa. 24; 46; 47; 93; Isa. 9; 63; Rev. 19)

Christ as Conqueror is, however, known in different scenes and seasons, and in different forms and manners, before He enters the kingdom.

As soon as He gave up the ghost, the victory of His death was owned in heaven, earth, and hell; for the vail of the temple was rent in twain, the rocks were split, and the graves were broken up.

As He entered the heavens, He was received and sat down as Conqueror. He was at once acknowledged there as fresh from His conflict and conquest here. As the One who had overcome, He sat down with the Father on His throne.

When His saints rise to meet Him, they will, in their own persons, display His victory, the victory He has achieved for them. Their ascending and responsive shout will utter it— “Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. 15)

In these different seasons and forms the triumph of Christ is celebrated before He enters the kingdom. And animating and happy truth this is—Jesus ascended on high as a Conqueror. But never, till Jesus ascended, had heaven known a Conqueror. A distant report of His victory had reached it, I may say, when the temple-vail was rent. But never had heaven been the place of a conqueror, till the Lord returned there. The Lord God in His glories had been there, the Lord God as Creator and Ruler also, and the angels that excel in strength had waited there. Some who kept

not their first estate there may have been cast down, and others have sung at the foundations of the earth being laid; but never had the presence of a conqueror adorned and gladdened it till Jesus ascended, But then it was so. He had then destroyed him that had the power of death. He had led captivity captive. He had made a show of principalities. He had overcome the world. He had, as the true Samson, borne the hostile gates to the top of the hill. The grave-clothes had been left in the empty sepulcher, as the spoils of war and trophies of conquest. And thus, as conqueror, Jesus ascended. Heaven had already known the living God, but never till then the living God in victory. And our ascension after Him will only, in other terms, tell of triumph, and be another display of a host of conquerors. Then, at the end, when the kingdom is entered, it will be entered (as we have already said) by a Conqueror after His day of battle and war of deliverance out of the hand of enemies.

Now, according to all, this is, I believe, the “new song” of which we read in scripture; for the songs there are conquerors' songs, and they are so many rehearsals, so to speak, of the kingdom's song. Such was that of Moses and the congregation on the banks of the Red Sea. Such was Deborah's. Such were the utterances, if they may be called songs, of Hannah and of Mary; and such is to be the song of Rev. 15 in its season—the harpers in heaven standing there in victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.

This gives a “new” theme for singing or gladness, and hence “the new song.” The old song, sung by the morning stars over the foundations of the earth, was not a conqueror's song, a song celebrating a divine victory either for the redemption or avenging of God's chosen. There was no theme of victory then, for no battle had been fought and won. But sin since then has entered. A great counter-force has been in action, and the Lord has had to go forth as “a man of war,” the God of battles; and therefore at the end a new song, a song with a new theme or burden, must be awakened to celebrate Him in this new action or character of glory. The song of Moses was a conqueror's song, and so the song of the Lamb. “O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory.” The song over creation must give place in compass and melody to the song over the triumphs of Jesus.

What new honors, we may adoringly and thankfully say, are preparing for Him through our history and what new joys for heaven! For His victories have been for us, accomplishing, as I observed, our deliverance and vindication in the face of our enemies. The glory of those victories is His, the fruit of them ours.

And it is a joyous thought that the Lord is to enter His coming kingdom as a conqueror, taking the throne of Solomon the peaceful after the wars and victories of David. But this joy implies scenes of a tremendous character. Triumph, of itself, is a bright idea, but it is full of recollections of fields of battle and scenes of bloodshed. And so with our Jesus. The joy of seeing Him in triumph and the power of His kingdom is bright and gladdening; but “the winepress” has first to be “trodden.”

And still more—though that is solemn—the treading of the winepress, or the execution of divine judgment, speaks of previous corruption or of the ripening of the vine of the earth. If the Lord in judgment have to tread the winepress, the winepress has first to be filled.

And where are we, at this moment, actually standing? Not in the possession of the immovable kingdom; not in the sight of the triumph that is to usher it forth, or in the audience of the new song

which is to accompany that triumph; not in the vision of the field of Bozrah, and the garments dyed with blood, the day of divine judgment which leads to the triumph; but in a certain stage of the ripening of the vine of Sodom which is soon to be cast into the winepress, or to meet the judgment of the Lord.

There we stand, and the moment is solemn. Every day, like the heat of summer, is but maturing and mellowing the grapes of gall, or the clusters of Gomorrah. Our prospects are thus strange, awful, and glorious beyond thought. We look for the increasing growth of evil, for the winepress of the wrath of God to receive and judge it, and then for the triumph and the kingdom of Jesus. For such things we look, as far as our eye is turned, to the earth; but “we stand at the head of two ways.” Enoch stood there before. He looked down the way of the earth, and there he saw the maturing of ungodliness, and the Lord with ten thousand of His saints coming to execute judgment; but he himself was borne upward, the way of the heavens. (Jude 14; Heb. 11:6.) The new song was sung by Jesus after His resurrection (Psa. 11:3); it will be sung by the Church after her resurrection or ascension to heaven (Rev. 5:9; 14:3); and then it will be sung by Israel in the kingdom which is their resurrection. (Psa. 98:1.)

Chapter 172

Scripture Query and Answer: The Rising of the Old Testament Saints

Q. When will the Old Testament saints be raised? Are they included in “them that are Christ's at his coming” (1 Cor. 15:23), and raised when the Church is caught up? (1 Thess. 4) in which case they would be said to “sleep through Jesus,” and to be “the dead in Christ.” Or, do they wait some little time longer, and only raised on the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15-18), where “thy servants the prophets” are spoken of together with others (the seventh trumpet being the final one of this dispensation, and thus in keeping with the word to Daniel in chapter xii. 13, “Go thy way till the end be; and thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days")? And still more striking is that which Job says (chap. xix. 25-27), “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.... in my flesh shall I see God.” Was not this expecting Him on the earth, as Christ will be in the millennium? (Zech. 14, Acts 1) H. W. T.

A. I see no reason to doubt that all saints who have died will be raised up when Christ comes and changes us, the living, that remain to the moment of His presence, and both shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. “Those that are the Christ's,” in 1 Cor. 15:23, seem to me a category put in an expressly large style so as to embrace the saints before the Church as well as such as compose it. Compare Heb. 11. And this is confirmed by the special communication which begins at 1 Cor. 15:51: “Behold I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Here there is a secret beyond the Old Testament which revealed no more than the resurrection and the coming with the Lord in the day of His appearing. (Job 19, Zech. 14) But the apostle was inspired to add both the manner of raising the dead-saints and especially the change of us, the living, then found here below, who shall all he alike changed, and, according to 1 Thess. 4, caught up to meet the Lord above. Hence in this latter scripture “those put to sleep through Jesus” may be said of dead Christians (the occasion of the need of comfort to the living), while the next verse speaks with greater comprehensiveness of those fallen asleep in general. Again, “the dead in Christ” need not be restrained to those since redemption; it is in contrast with the dead in Adam or after a merely natural sort.

There is nothing said of raising saints from the dead under the seventh trumpet, though I do not object to the conclusion that, as it is the winding up of God's appeals to the world and the introduction of the world kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, so it announces the judicial recompense in broad terms up to the end. The time of award to His servants the prophets, and to the saints, &c., does not fix it as the moment of their resurrection—they may well have been raised before. At any rate nothing of the kind can be built on a passage which is silent as to that for which it is alleged.

Nor is there the least warrant to connect “the seventh trumpet” With “the last trump” of 1 Cor. 15, nor even with the “great sound of a trumpet” in Matt. 24 “The seventh” is of course the closing one

of the Apocalyptic series and of the general course of the book up to the kingdom. “The last trump” of 1 Cor. 15 means simply the final summons when the heavenly saints leave their earthly sojourn to join the Lord—a figure, like others in the chapter, taken from familiar military matters. The trumpet in the gospel is rather connected with the divine call to gather Israel from all lands according to the prophets. There is no doubt that when this point is reached all the departments of the kingdom, heavenly and earthly, will be occupied and displayed by Christ, the risen saints, and the people of God, nor will it cease till every creature, even of the lost, bows and confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Daniel and Job will be there, of course, among the rest.

The scripture which is most to the point (of proving saints raised just before the millennial kingdom begins) is Rev. 20:4; but I see no reason to doubt that the first class already enthroned includes the Old Testament saints with the Church, while the two classes particularly described and then raised in addition to the foregoing are only the apocalyptic confessors. This then gives no countenance to the view that the Old Testament saints are reserved till then. The sufferers at the end of this age are specified as then made to live and reign with Christ: else they might seem to have lost all as regards the kingdom. No others are said to be raised at that time.

Chapter 173

Order of Creation

Angels were created before any of the progressive creation, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. The highest of creatures were first created and abide (as unfallen) in their estate; then the progressive creation as a general rule from inanimate to reptiles, beasts, and man, when moral responsibility now comes in, and failure, and then the great truth of redemption, but this by the incarnation of the Son of God, God Himself coming into sorrow, both in Christ and by His Spirit, so as that man should have chords of divine harmony, which no angel could, and death—the power over the creature not created for death—being entered into, man in Christ is raised far above all principality and power, and we sit in heavenly places in Him. See Psa. 8 and use of it in the New Testament. And this angels have been contemplating from the beginning.

This beautiful, divine order (i. e., first, the highest creatures, angels, then (beginning from the lowest, yet Lamarekian or Darwinian development formally disproved both by the placoid early fishes, and the superior Saurian class coming before existing Saurians) the classes continuing in order up to man—invertebrate, vertebrate, mammalia, “a little lower than the angels") shows also very distinctly the difference between eternal existence and eternal life. The angels have eternal existence as creatures, not eternal life through having Christ for their life; whereas Christ being the eternal life which was with the Father (an eternal life given us in Him before the world was), the incarnation, redemption, and resurrection sets us in this life in risen glory far above principalities and powers. It is not creation order, but purpose, redemption, power of resurrection. An additional truth comes in by Christ's death. Not only He becomes life to us, but God has quickened us “together with” Him. This detail gives the special character of the Church or assembly. But the order of the divine ways is in all this exceedingly beautiful.

Chapter 174

Our Genesis

There is a striking correspondence between “the beginning” in the Book of Genesis, and in the Gospel of John, though the subjects of each are so vastly different. The Creator in one, and the Word in the other, alike come forth into the respective circles in which each is to be displayed. The earth was without form and void, and the eternal Word was concealed in His own essential perfectness.

The elements with which we are now familiar served to bring into existence and beauty a material creation; and the attributes, by which Deity has clothed itself; introduced the Creator. True, one was the beautiful development of a thing formed; and the other, the almighty power and wisdom of Him that formed it. “God spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast.” As to the earth, it was without form— “Darkness was upon the face of the deep—and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” But the eternal “Word, was with God, for the Word, was God; and the same was in the beginning, with God.”

Creation and the Creator are necessary to each other; but for what different reasons—like the potter and the clay! The formless and void earth, with darkness upon its face, carries along the secret power of its formative beauty in the Spirit of God which moved upon the face of its waters. So in John, “In him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness.”

The Genesis formations, of day and night, firmaments, earth, and seas, with their greater and lesser lights, are completed; and the history of signs and seasons, days and years, with the fruitful products of the earth for man and beast, are familiar to us all. But the Gospel of John now claims its own preeminence, and passing away into heights and depths, which neither the sun above, nor the sea beneath, can measure, brings out its own mystery, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only, begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.”

Again, if we go back to the Adam of Genesis, “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” But pass we on to the new created man of John, and we find another race, “For as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

The creation of Genesis just ran the cycle of its one week, as we follow it in its magnificent course, from evening to morning—and from its first day to the sixth day, till “God rested on the seventh day, from all the work which he had made; and blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.” In this Eden man was made the responsible head, on whose obedience the whole creation depended. Adam sinned, and the link of relationship was snapped between the Creator and the creature, and all broke down. “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain,” is the sad consequence.

The Genesis of John's Gospel brings in a revelation of grace and truth, reveals the Second man, the Word made flesh, “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” In this new beginning, grace—the grace of God—towards man, as a sinner, takes the place of responsibility between the creature and the Creator. Eden's gate soon closed upon the fair scene of the six days' work, and upon the sabbath of rest too—the cherubim, and the flaming sword, forbad the thought, much more the vain attempt, of the sinner to return. Grace, and the resources of God, are what John records: the Word made flesh was the great reserve of God. “In him was life, and the life was the light of men” is become the new connecting link with God. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;” and this is the grand theme which the Gospel of John opens out.

How touchingly this is recorded in the intercourse between Jesus and the woman of Samaria! The links which sin had broken in Genesis have been formed anew, between God and the sinner, but only in and through Christ, who shed His blood for the remission of sins. The former ground of creature responsibility is abandoned through the knowledge of that eternal redemption which we have in Christ, “the beginning of the new creation of God.”

Nathaniel under the fig tree, and Nicodemus the master of Israel, set us in the path of the kingdom glory, with “the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man;” and moreover, all must be born again, “to see or enter into it.” How blessedly does the Messiah, the King of Israel, undo every burden, and loose them that were appointed to die! How refreshing thus to see the Second man, as the source of life and joy, where the first had brought in death and misery!

The marriage scene of Cana in Galilee gives further the style and actings of our Lord in millennial blessing, when the water is turned into wine, and every water pot filled to the brim. What a word will that be, when, in the full consciousness of unhindered joy around Him, and Himself the cause and producer of it, He says, “Draw out now, and bear to the governor of the feast.”

There are two ways in which the Lord opens out the fullness of His person to us in this gospel. The first is what we have been considering, and may be described by that verse in chapter ii., “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory” —a title by which He will link the ruined creation of Genesis with the victorious effects of His own death and resurrection, when He comes again to fill every heart with gladness and every tongue with praise. But other and higher glories are connected with His person and may be described by another verse in chapter 1: “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,” and it is in these two characters of divine and human glory that the Word made flesh passes along before our view as we follow Him throughout this precious book of our new Genesis. The difference we are considering is this: the latter is the personal glory as of the only begotten of the Father, and the former was the miraculous power which accredited Him to the people by act and deed. Various chapters might be selected as displaying one glory or the other, and here and there a combination of them, which is very grand.

Before passing on, let me say that while the first and second chapters have been introduced for the purpose just described of marking these two especial glories of Christ, yet that chapter 1 throughout is the unfolding of the person of the Son, from his own essential being, into the relations by which He stands connected with God and man, and also in the various titles by which promise, type, and prophecy bad pointed Him out. It is in this breadth and fullness of grace that the

Father's love has given Him forth to the faith of His beloved people, and for which the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove lighted on Him and sealed Him!

In chapter 3 the Lord in His intercourse with Nicodemus presents Himself in the circle of His own personal glory, taking as the center the antitype of Moses and the brazen serpent, giving Himself out to the faith of a needy sinner, as the lifted up Son of man—a center of a circle which in its vast dimensions embraces the love of God which is above all sin in its essential holiness, and yet stoops down to the worthlessness of the perishing one, whom it rescues in sovereign grace.

So again in chapter 4, where the personal and the moral glory of the Lord shines forth with the woman at the well, leading her up to the springs of life from which He had come, and yet giving her to drink thereof according to the perceptions of her own need which He in grace awakened, He maintains His own ground in this touching scene and proclaims “God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Thus He connects God, in what He is in love, with the poor Samaritan in her sin, and by the supply of this living water to her soul, which was in her a “well of water springing up into everlasting life,” led her to drink from a spring which is divine.

The nobleman from Capernaum brings Him down to the level of miracles again; but He consents to this, with the rebuke, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.”

Chapter 5 begins with a word of power to the man at the pool of Bethesda. “Jesus said to him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk.” From this point He rises to the height of His personal glory, and says to the Jews, “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise;” and this is applied to quickening, judging, and raising the dead, in this Bethesda-world, the house of effusion (for such is its name), as well as of pity and mercy.

In chapter 6 a great multitude followed Him, “because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were diseased.” And He puts His disciples to the proof as to whether they were yet up to the point of His personal glory, by asking, “Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?” Subsequently, this scene of five loaves and two fishes gives place to the grand action which had brought Him down from heaven, as “the bread of God, that giveth life to the world.” And here, if we may anticipate the tenth (or Shepherd) chapter, it is only for the purpose of saying, the Lord seems to be acting in this character in chapter iv., where He led in the sheep of Samaria, and bade them lie down by the still waters; as in chapter vi. He leads them into “the green pastures.” “I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh;” for “my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.”

The feast of Tabernacles, in chapter 7, like the Passover, in chapter 6, carries the Lord up into His own height with the Father. He passes beyond the reach of a reasoning, caviling people, and presents Himself to faith as equal with God, or rather as identified with Him. “I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.” Again, “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” One with the Father in counsel and purpose, yet He is on the level with any who can lift the veil and see His personal glory, and take, in the title of His grace, all He is. In the previous chapter He had spoken of “ascending up where he was before;” and now, contemplating the day of His glorification at the right hand of God, He connects His disciples with the blessing, winch should descend to them from thence: “He that

believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," adding, "this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." What streams in the desert here surround us, as we follow the incarnate Word, the crucified Son of man, and the exalted Lord!

The narrative, in the beginning of chapter 8, important though it be, serves as the ground of introducing Himself as the Light of the world, adding, "He that followeth me, shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life." In the midst of such a scene, what other challenge could He make than "Let him that is without sin among you, first cast a stone at her;" and then takes His own place as a Teacher and a Deliverer. "Verily, verily I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." And again, "If any man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death." What assurances! They are like the grapes of Eshcol, that come from another land to thirsting souls. "Free from sin" through the lifted up Son of man; "the light of life" by following Him; not "tasting death" through His resurrection. In what majesty and grace has He thus displayed Himself! and how truly do all His paths drop fatness! Vet those who could not cast a stone at the adulteress now take up stones to cast at Him who had said, in the consciousness of His personal glory, "Before Abraham was, I am." But Jesus hid Himself; and, in the silence of disappointed love, "went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." They have lost Him!

Before entering on chapter 9 we may observe (in reference to the previous eight) a dispensational link which connects them together in a way of its own; for while every type and promise pointed to Him, He must necessarily embody the type and supersede it. This is the fact even as regards His forerunner, for John's two disciples follow Jesus, and John declared, "He must increase, but I must decrease." So as to the temple, "I will raise it up in three days; this spake he of his body." And again, with Nicodemus and the brazen serpent in the wilderness, "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up." So also He takes the place of Jacob's well, and gives the living water; and at the pool of Bethesda He supersedes the angel, who at a certain season troubled it. He is likewise the antitype of the manna, by proclaiming Himself "the living bread." He also takes the place of the feast of Tabernacles, and finally acts as one superior to Moses the lawgiver, and greater than their father Abraham. Israel's hopes and prophecies are thus embodied in Himself; and in this character He meets the man blind from his birth, in chapter ix., ready to do for the nation what He does for the individual, if there is faith to receive Him. He presents Himself to them, with the man whose eyes He had opened. Will they accept the hand stretched out to give them sight? What a moment! But they say, "We know this man, whence he is; when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." They cast out the man who confessed Him to have come from God; but to be cast out of the synagogue was then, as now, to be thrown upon Jesus, who reveals Himself to the man as the Son of God; and he said, "Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." Jesus quits them with the solemn words, "For judgment I am come into the world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."

In chapter 10 the cast out sheep, in the person of the blind man last mentioned, gives occasion for Jesus to declare Himself the Good Shepherd, who lays down His life for the sheep. To Him the porter openeth. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." There are also "other sheep which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, that there may be one flock and one shepherd." "And I give unto them eternal life; and they

shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” The double title in which the sheep are held is very precious. “My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him,” accusing Him of blasphemy, because He, being a man, made Himself equal with God. He makes a last appeal to them: “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. Therefore they sought again to take him.” They will not be gathered into the fold, and they cast out the Shepherd of the sheep.

Chapters 11, and 12, or the Bethany chapters, are complete in themselves; and, if not standing alone, are to be viewed as family paintings, which represent the circle of Christ's social affections, with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary—a home group which had been gathered around Him—a green spot—a miniature representation of what the wilderness is to be when He comes again: and by His abiding presence turns it into a fruitful field, and gives the true length and breadth to Bethany, or the house of song (which its name implies), the house of obedience, and the house of the grace of the Lord. In the light of the past, as John gives it, Bethany and its inmates may well stand as a companion picture with the scene at the mount of transfiguration, where Jesus led others up to be “eye-witnesses of his majesty, when he received from God the Father honor and glory.” The one is the circle of the social affections of the Lord” Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus;” and the other is the manifestation of the “Son of man coming in his kingdom.” But these two chapters supply their own proofs by which, as we have said, this gospel is occupied.

In chapter 11 the death of Lazarus leads Jesus to announce Himself as the “resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” The knowledge of Christ carried no outside sin and condemnation, as other chapters have shown us; and now this further knowledge of Christ carries through death and the grave. “Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth.” Thus the Lord, in this resurrection scene, sets “the glory of God” above sin and its consequences.

In chapter 12 Mary anoints the feet of Jesus, and the whole house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Jesus interprets the act, saying, “Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.” For the last time He presents Himself in the light of promise and prophecy to Israel, and rides into Jerusalem on the colt the foal of an ass. “When Jesus was glorified, then his disciples remembered that they had done these things unto him.” His own death is now before Him as the only door of deliverance for His people, and for His own glory, and the establishment of covenanted blessing with Jehovah and the nation. He consequently takes a larger sphere for Himself (outside His Messiah, and king of Israel relations), and on the coming up of the Greeks to see Jesus, says, “The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” By His own righteous title He had raised Lazarus from the grave, but He is now about to descend into death Himself, as between God, and mankind, and Satan; that God may take Him up out of the grave, and declare Him to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead, for obedience to the faith, among all nations. (Rom. 1)

“The light of the world” has traveled over its orbit in these twelve chapters, and, as was declared at its rising, the darkness comprehended it not.” But before it sets, Jesus cries, “Yet a little while is the light with you While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.” These things spake Jesus and departed and did hide Himself from them! He is refused in His personal glories—so also as to His acts and deeds, from the “beginning of miracles, in Cana of Galilee” to the close of His ministry, this is the sum, “though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.” His incarnation has failed as a bond of union between “His own” and Himself, and therefore between them and Jehovah. Man must be changed in the springs of his nature; and what deeper work can be undertaken that shall effect this change? This is what is now before Jesus, and in the prospect of the cross He says, “Now is my soul troubled.... Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said signifying what death he should die.”

The secret is told, for here are found the hidden depths in which Christ must work for the glory of God, the overthrow of Satan, and the salvation of His beloved people. This closes the first half of John's Gospel, proving that relations in the flesh, however drawn out by what He was who was “manifest in the flesh,” fell short, infinitely short, of what the holiness of God required, or the condition of humanity around Him needed.

Redemption must be the new basis of intercourse between God and His creatures, and these are the tried stones—the foundation stones—the precious corner stones—which the Lord lays in His death and resurrection. He turns away from everything on the earth—the links are broken, never to be formed again, except on the other side of death and judgment, where divine life, in resurrection power, is the new holding of all established blessing. “Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father;” and this opens a new path upward to the faith of “his own which were in the world.” Judaism, in its full results, is the manifestation that God is come down to man upon the earth; and this will be displayed in the millennial days of Israel's blessing. But Christianity is based on the wondrous fact that man, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is gone up to God into the heavens. This, however, finds its place in the beginning of chapter 13, or the last half and the heavenly side of this gospel.

B.

Chapter 175

Our Place With Christ Glorified

We must know our place with Christ glorified before we can accept the cross as our practical portion here.

Chapter 176

The Panoply of God

(Eph. 6)

One great thing in Christianity is, that it brings us back to God. Not only have we mercies from God, providential and the like, but we are brought to God. Towards the Jew God had a vail before His face, and He said, “I dwell in the thick darkness;” and once a year, or the day of atonement, the blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat, but now once and forever sin is put away by the sacrifice of Christ, and we are brought into the very presence of God. Good and evil being known, the question between good and evil had to be settled before God. The redemption of the cross brings us out of the evil—from the evil to Himself. God's Son suffered the just for the unjust to bring us to God. The consequence of this is that the whole life of the Christian is to go on with God—every day becoming better acquainted with God—everything going on in the presence of God. All our ways are elevated by this. If only a servant, he not only serves his master but Christ; and therefore if he has a froward master, he can serve him just the same, because it is Christ he serves. All the life of the Christian is perfect liberty, because he is in the presence of God; it is liberty from sin, from fear, from wrath. Children are to obey their parents in the Lord. The commonest things in life are raised in their character through service to Christ. The parent must not allow evil in the child, but train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and the master to the servant must forbear threatening. In virtue of our place before God, our liberty and happiness are as perfect and blessed now as they will be hereafter: only the body will be set right then.

Then, after speaking of the common details of life, the apostle rises up to speak of the proper position of the Christian as such—free in things; but we are to be “strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.” He goes on to speak of the whole armor of God. We are supposed, though in conflict, to be in our proper position of blessing with God, standing in the power of redemption, not having to get there. The warfare is to stand when there. Satan's aim is to get us out of that place. There can be no conflict between us and God, but between us and the power of evil. There we are as being God's army. We are naturally under Satan's power, but redemption brings us into God's army. This was the position of Israel when warring with Amalek—they were on God's side, and He said He would have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

Christ's conflict in Gethsemane was quite another thing. He was enduring, but He was accomplishing redemption too. We have it through Christ, and now have to stand. God can never use our flesh, but Satan always can; there is the difference. He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. The new nature Satan never can touch, but unjudged and undetected flesh he can, and cause me to fall. The first and last thing and all through as a question of power, is entire dependence. Satan will come in all manner of ways—worship, &c.; and if the flesh is not judged, he will deceive us by it. The thing is, we want the evil of the flesh detected by the word of God and not by temptation. “The word of God is quick and powerful,” &c. There is no good in the flesh. This, when I see how bad my flesh is, casts me

only on God—makes me feel the need of dependence. With our Lord Jesus there was entire dependence, and that is the perfection of a man. With us how different it is! You know how many things you do of your own suggestion, not perhaps knowingly and willingly, but you are betrayed into it.

“To stand against the wiles of the devil” —that is the use of the armor of God.

Christ has overcome, and therefore we have only to resist the devil and he will flee. If we resist him, he knows he has met Christ who has all strength against him, for He has vanquished him. The devil can never touch Christ in you—only the flesh; so if there is a fall, it is a proof you were walking in the flesh. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood,” &c. The contrast here is between the conflict with men that Joshua led the children of Israel against (flesh and blood as man, not sinful flesh, is meant here). Now we are not fighting with men, but we are Christians fighting with all these mighty beings, whose subtlety we are apt not to detect because they are so elevated—“against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual [powers of] wickedness in the heavenlies.”

Satan can easily overcome a man with his wiles, if we are not found in the strength of Christ. I must have God's armor. Man's armor, intellect, or power is nothing in conflict with Satan. Satan used his wiles to Christ, but He answered him with the word of God, and there was no power against it. We must have the whole or complete armor. If I have a breastplate, but no helmet for my head, I am assailable at that point. If it is only a matter of theory with me, I shall forget my helmet; but if I am in the place of dependence, I shall feel my need of it and take care to have it on. Independence makes us careless. If Satan can get a Christian to give an un-Christian testimony to the world, he is satisfied. If he can dim the heavenly testimony for Christ here, his object is gained. Christ was God's testimony here. We ought to be so now; and what Satan is striving at now is to dim it. God would have us “able to withstand in the evil day,” &c. All this time is an evil day. Though there is darkness in the world, we ought to be light in it. There are peculiar days of evil—heresy, infidelity, &c. So to an individual there are peculiar seasons of buffetings, tossings, exercises, evil days; but to stand is the great thing. We are sitting in unchangeable blessedness before God, but our position. in this world is standing. So David sat before the Lord, yet he had to fight the battles of the Lord. Our salvation is complete and perfect, for we are set down with Him who has by “one offering perfected forever them who are sanctified;” but we are standing in conflict—just as the poor man out of whom Legion was cast was sent back to his house to tell them how great things the Lord had done for him. The world (Gadarenes) would not have him, and the world will not have us; but we are to be God's army in this world and a witness to them, though they will not have us. It is a question of struggling against Satan while having the flesh in us. Therefore we need the “loins girt about with truth” —the affections girt up by the power of truth, and not to have all hanging loosely about. It is not merely having and knowing truth that will do. If the loins are girt about with truth, if the heavenly calling has power over you, you cannot follow the world; your affections will be in heaven, and Satan can have no power with you. The “loins” represent the inward bracing of the man's thoughts and feelings, and affections. All that is going on in the mind needs to be exercised in the truth so as to be girt with it. I can never use truth but in the presence of God, because truth is light, and light makes manifest darkness. Man on a sick bed will show what is in his heart. There is at last, sincerity there, when brought into the presence of God and abstracted from other things. There may have been much profession before, but nothing

but what is real stands before God.

All the perfection of divine life in man we get in Christ, and He is our example. In having on the armor of God we have on what Christ was and had (e.g., the “breastplate of righteousness.") All these things which are ours in Christ should be applied to us. Take truth—Christ is the truth and the righteous One. He is my righteousness. But it is here used for conflict against Satan—not for God, but for practical power. I must have it before God first, or I shall not be able to contend with Satan. I am made righteous before God—this is a settled thing; and now I want all that Christ is and has been for my power against the enemy. If a man have a bad conscience, there can be no power against Satan. There must be the “armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.” The loins must be girt with truth first, and then a man will walk as in the presence of God. There will be a savor of Christ's ways in his character. What a difference there is between a man walking before God and one walking before men! What a trouble there is to keep things straight for a man walking before men! While one who is walking before God, though in the presence of men, can leave things quietly to God. The real difference between a mere professor of Christ and a Christian is just this.

“Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” means, not only having peace with God, but walking in the spirit of peace. There is sure to be peace in the spirit of a man who is girt about with truth, and walking in the power of Christ's righteousness. A man who has been walking with God many years will be more gentle with others than one who has just begun to know Him; he will neither crave things, nor be irritated at evil in another, for his own soul has tasted what the peace of God is, walking with God in the power of it. Then suppose a man has all this on, there is the need of dependence. Independence is sin, and there is need therefore of always being in conflict, and having the undeviating confidence that God is for me.

The thing wanted then is the “shield of faith.” Satan comes and tempts me: Is God for you? how do you know? There are of course different kinds of temptation—not lusts, but questions whether God is for me, come what will. Then the shield of faith is needed. Christ was in an agony in the garden, but He could say Abba Father, all things are possible to Thee. On the cross, when He said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” — “but thou art holy” —God has His place, come what will. We are not to be afraid with any amazement. If Satan succeeds in terrifying a man, he flies, and there is no armor for the back. Of Saul, David said, “the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away” (amongst the Philistines). “The shield of faith” is that by which one is able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. To Christ he threw a fiery dart when he said, “cast thyself down.” Are you quite sure God is for you? Cast yourself down and try. No, says Christ; I know God is for me, I need not try. “It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” The dart is quenched by the word of God. If the dart of doubt or fear, &c., gets in, you have no power at all. The moment the heart gets troubled, remember, “if God be for us, who can be against us;” if thoughts arise about yourself, “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” God is for us through all, even chastening. If there is an Achan in the camp, God says, I will not go out with you: and they are beaten by a very little city. If God be for us, who against? The “shield of faith” is mentioned after the others, because there cannot be this lively faith (not the certainty of salvation is meant here but practical faith) if sin is allowed, and if the loins are not girt about with truth, &c. Recognizing ourselves as a people connected with God, in respect to this power that is in Him, is just faith. Moses might have reckoned on God through all the murmurings of the people,

&c.

All this is defensive armor .” the helmet of salvation also.” There is not a single blow aimed by the Christian warrior yet. What is the helmet? God has saved me and will save me. “Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell,” &c. A general, broad, full apprehension that all through God will be with me and for me; not only faith in the particular thing and at the particular time, but as expressed in Rom. 8 Nothing can separate from the love of God, &c.; therefore I may lift up my head with joy.

Now I can use the word of God offensively, as “the sword of the Spirit;” now I can fight. We ought to be able to confound every enemy, not with man's wisdom, intellect, and understanding; but in the power of the Spirit. Do others not believe in it? I am not going to give up the sword of the Spirit because you do not think it will cut. I know it will cut, and therefore use it. There is a power and authority felt by the person who uses it. There must be a sense of dependence for this; and therefore prayer, the sense of dependence expressed, is needed— “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” Of one it was said that he labored earnestly in prayer for the saints. This was because of the sense of the conflict from Satan going on with the saints; therefore labor needed watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. If other things come in, I have no power to turn everything into prayer; therefore watching is needed. Give yourselves to prayer. You are in God's interests connected with all saints; therefore pray for all saints.

There is nowhere that conflict is so much felt as in prayer: that is where Satan desires to come in.

Verse 19. We should be bold for God in such a world as this. How far are you identified with Christ in the world? And are you careful to avoid everything that dishonors Christ? Whatever destroys Christ's character before men is really a fall, though it may not be positively gross sin.

Chapter 177

Paul's Epistles in What Order Written?

HE who values the New Testament as a revelation from God finds rich quarries open to research in every department of it. As every science connected with God's marvelous works in creation branches out into so many directions that most men are obliged to limit themselves to one or two only of its known departments, so it is with the word of God. If “the heavens declare the glory of God,” “the law of the Lord is also perfect.” One is richly repaid in studying it. One branch of inquiry connects itself with another, and thus we find our hearts interested in examining further and further into His truth; and the more we know, the more we love Him who has manifested Himself in it.

The order (not necessarily the dates) of the Pauline writings is one of these branches, on which we may profitably spend a little time. Let no one think the subject trivial. We shall find in the study of it some remarkable traits in the apostle's character, and be assisted in tracing the progress and development of truth in His own mind.

The views to be given out are quite open to criticism, for they present only the method of research, without insisting that the steps by which conclusions are reached are strictly to be relied on. One can say however on this subject what cannot be said on all Biblical ones, that a mistake can do but little harm, whilst the very detecting of it is sure to lead into new fields of thought.

The writer would only mention as an encouragement to those who may succeed better, that he has never read any human writing on the subject.

To begin: in reading 2 Timothy one finds these passages: “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course” (2 Tim. 4:6, 7), conclusive evidence that this was the last of all his epistles. It was doubtless written from Rome. (2 Tim. 1:17.) We may take it then as the starting point of our inquiries and reason upwards. The next which arrest the attention are those to the Colossians and Philemon, which we may assuredly bracket together. They were written at the same time and certainly before 2 Timothy, for in the latter Demas had forsaken him. In Colossians he had not. Mark and Aristarchus too were with him in Colossians; in 2 Timothy they were not. (Philem. 1:1, 24; Col. 4; 2 Tim. 4:11.) We must then undoubtedly place Colossians and Philemon prior to 2 Timothy, but with a reasonable gap, in order to give time for the desertion of Demas, and also for the journey of Mark, who, not having left Paul when he wrote to the Colossians (comp. Col. 4:10), was to be brought back from his mission when he wrote to Timothy. (2 Tim. 4:11.) These are sufficient reasons for thinking that the two which next precede were Colossians and Philemon, Timothy being at the time with Paul, his name being conjoined in the address.

There is a temptation to consider Ephesians as of the same date, from the remarkable similarity in truth between that and the Colossians, as if, on that account they may have been written at the same time, and because of Tychicus being, as with that to the Colossians, apparently the bearer. But I think we may regard the visit of Tychicus to Ephesus as an independent one, at a time when Timothy was not with the apostle at Rome, inasmuch as he is not conjoined in the address as he

probably would have been, had it been written at the same time with the Colossians. Moreover, in writing at the last to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:1, 2), he mentions having sent Tychicus to Ephesus. He might, therefore, have sent him at the last with this epistle to a circle of churches of which Ephesus was the center. It becomes therefore a delicate question to know where to place it—a question of internal evidence. We can isolate it for the present. The letter to the Philippians was certainly from the metropolis (Timothy being with him: chap. i. 1); for it sends salutations from persons in Caesar's household, and mentions his bonds, but hopes for deliverance, and consequently to see them again (chap. i. 24-26), which he does not in 2 Timothy. We must place the epistle still earlier than that to Colosse, before any terrible burst of persecution; but, as I judge, after the close of the Acts, and when declension in the churches began to be apparent. (Phil. 2:21.) Be it remembered we are only for the present offering standing-ground for the feet.

The Epistle to the Hebrews next claims our attention. The words, “They of Italy salute you” (chap. xiii. 24), give the impression that it was sent from Italy immediately after his landing there, perhaps before he reached Rome itself. May we not suppose that it was meditated upon after that singular disclosure (Acts 21:18-21) made to him by James and the elders of the condition of the Jewish believers at Jerusalem, got ready during some part of the journey, and sent immediately on his landing, with a postscript added (Heb. 13:22 to end), before he knew anything or much of the state of things in Italy, except to say, “They of Italy salute you?” One remark is well here—Timothy, who had sailed with him out of Asia (Acts 20:4), was not with him. (Heb. 13:23.) He had been put in prison somewhere not in Rome, had been released and was shortly expected. This shows that we are sure of none of those who embarked with Paul having reached Rome with him, except Luke and Aristarchus. (Acts 17:2, compare Philem. 1:1, 24) I say Luke, because in the Acts “we” and “us” (Acts 25; 27:2) always include Luke the writer. The others may have been left at the various places they touched at.

Let me now recapitulate the order of these letters, but in the simpler form of earlier to later. 1. Hebrews, during his journey to or immediately on his arrival in Italy. 2. Philippians, when his bondage was not very severe. 3. Colossians and Philemon (bracketed), Paul an aged man in prison. 4. Ephesians, (?) Paul in prison. 5. 2 Timothy, Paul expecting to be offered, having been before the judgment, no man standing by him.

We have now got some few landmarks, although discrepancies could be easily pointed out, which might in some measure be met by supposing the apostle to have had a release, to have made a journey coming back by Asia, and to have been again and finally imprisoned. Tradition seems to have embalmed this opinion (which has certainly a show of reason) by the subscription in our English New Testament that 2 Timothy was written from Rome when Paul was brought before Nero the second time. The other epistles, the ground of which is, in some instances, still more difficult and uncertain, have now to be considered.

These are the two to the Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, Titus, the two to the Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians.

It is best to begin with those to the Corinthians, whence we shall more easily come to the others.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians may have been written from Ephesus somewhere in the time taken up between Acts 19:21 and 20:1, for the following reasons: Paul, in his first European

journey, comes from Philippi through the country to Thessalonica, thence (by sea?) to Athens, and thence to Corinth (Acts 18:1) for the first time, and in that chapter we find also mention of Sosthenes, the same person who is joined with him (unless good reasons be shown to the contrary) in the first letter. Paul continued there eighteen months (chap. 18:11), Silas and Timotheus being with him. (Ver. 5. Compare 2 Cor. 1:19.) Thence he went to Ephesus and Syria, but Apollos came to Corinth. (Acts 19:1.) Now, as in his first epistle, continued mention is made of this brother (who was with him at the time, 1 Cor. 16:12), it is evident it could not have been written before Acts 19, when Paul was at Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8), for at that time “he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.” (Acts 19:22.) Now as in 1 Cor. 16:10 Timothy is mentioned as likely to come, it is probable that he was to go there from Macedonia, but, although probable, there is no strict necessity for supposing that he bore the letter, which could hardly have been written until after the uproar about Diana the goddess of the Ephesians. (1 Cor. 15:32; Acts 19:23.) Notice particularly 1 Cor. 16:5, “Now I will come unto you when I shall pass through Macedonia, for I do pass through Macedonia,” compared with Acts 19:21, his anxiety in both instances being about a collection for Jerusalem, which he was to carry. This occupation of the apostle's mind about the poor Jews is not a bad mark for showing us that they could not have been written before he had determined to go to Jerusalem with a collection, and that hardly more than a year could have elapsed between the two epistles.

Before, however, I touch upon 2 Corinthians, it is better to consider the date, or rather order of Titus, who occupies such a place in that second epistle. The letter is addressed to him in Crete, where he had been left by the apostle on one of his numerous voyages. When written, Apollos was also in the island; indeed, I judge that he may have carried the letter, and by this fact, whether he was the bearer or not, we may be assured that it was written after 1 Corinthians, at which time, as we have seen, Apollos was with Paul. (1 Cor. 16:12) Titus is desired to meet the apostle at Nicopolis, a city not far from Philippi, where he had determined to winter. Is it not then next to certain that he (Titus) did all the work among the Corinthians (as sent from that city), which is narrated in 2 Cor. 2:12, 13; 7:6; 8:16, &c? Was he not the intervening messenger between that church and the apostle, pending the latter's hesitancy as to going there himself? I place it then between the two epistles. In like manner, I judge that 1 Timothy was written between the two same Epistles to the Corinthians. In Acts 19:22 Paul sends Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, whilst he remains in Asia. In Acts 20:1, 2 he goes into Macedonia and, as I would suggest this to be the time alluded to, leaves Timothy at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3); after which time then he writes 1 Timothy, “Hoping to come to him shortly.” (1 Tim. 3:14, 15.) They had met before 2 Corinthians was written, because Timothy is conjoined with him in the address. I can only bracket Titus and 1 Timothy, inclining to the opinion that Titus was the later. Very briefly would I advert to the contents of these two letters, as moral evidence that they cannot come much out of the order in which I have placed them. Thus, they are full of directions as to the government of churches, and as to the character of mischief which these two agents of the apostle would be sure to fall in with, whether from fallen human nature itself, or from the bad education it had received; but there is little or no supposition either in the way of prophecy declension or from individual experience of the rapid declension into which the churches would fall, as is exhibited in 2 Timothy. There is in Titus a direction how to deal with a single heretic, otherwise there are only warnings, as to what everyone, who is in the habit of dealing with his own heart or with those of others, is liable to meet. I cannot assign, then, a later

date to either of these epistles, and I think it would be difficult to put that to Titus earlier on account of Apollos.

We now come to 2 Corinthians. From the Epistle to the Romans (chap. 15:26) it is easy to show, that he cleared up all his questions with the Corinthians, through the mediation of Titus and eventually left Corinth by land for Philippi, and thence by Troas to Jerusalem, and through an imprisonment of more than two years at Cesarea to Rome thus reaching that city in a way, and by a journey far longer and far different than he had expected. (Comp. Rom. 15:23, 24.) This 2 Corinthians was, in my judgment, written from Philippi by Titus and Luke, “The brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things.” The two names are attached to the end, and it is a question upon which such a thing as tradition may have its weight. Timothy was with him, and, after sending it, I believe Paul followed in person to Corinth, whence, as just mentioned, he left for Rome by the route just mentioned.

Our task now becomes much easier. The letter to the Romans was written from Cenchrea by Phebe in the full belief of himself making a visit to Rome. I judge it was the very last be wrote before quitting Greece and Corinth (Acts 20:2, 3) to return by Macedonia to Jerusalem. (Compare chap. xv. 25.) “But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.” “For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.” This and the salutation of Gains and Erastus (compare 1 Cor. 1:14) leave no doubt on my own mind that it was written from Corinth, and that all differences with the Corinthians had happily terminated. Three more epistles have only now to engage our attention, Galatians, and the two to Thessalonians. Tracing upwards from Corinthians, the Thessalonians came next. In each Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy are joined with Paul in the address. Now as we only know of these two being in company together with Paul from Acts 17 down to Acts 18:5, we must suppose they were both written from Corinth, the one soon after the other, Timothy, be it observed (1 Thess. 3:2), having made a journey there between whiles.

The Epistle to the Galatians requires a little more consideration. As there is not a salutation in it, we must judge of its date entirely from internal evidence. I should put it early, and I think it possible from chapter 2:1, that the Galatians were acquainted with Titus and Barnabas before the quarrel, and that it may have been written even before Paul first left Asia for Europe; but one cannot speak with any certainty. The same line of internal evidence may be applied here as to Titus and 1 Timothy. It is a concise and logical discourse on the difference between Christianity and Judaism (Paul's own life, doctrinally considered, being the illustration), in respect to justification and sonship; as the Epistle to the Hebrews is on the difference between Christian and Jewish worship. But all particulars as to his own practical experience so largely detailed in 2 Corinthians are wanting, although he was bearing in his body the stigmata of the Lord Jesus. (Compare 2 Cor. 11:24.)

He was at least twice in Galatia (Acts 16:6; 18:23), and the churches appear to have been organized there before he writes at all to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:1); and the internal evidence is strong, that it must have been sent when he had been feeling the positive mischief which had resulted from the attempt to mix up law and grace, in other words Christianity with Judaism. He had now taken a thoroughly independent position, but the strife was only as yet between the two: corruption from within had not yet appeared. If not earliest of all, it would come after 2

Thessalonians; but where all is conjecture, tradition may have preserved the truth that it came from Borne, though there is no mention of any imprisonment.

How often has the writer, in thus briefly reviewing the subject, been tempted to break out into disquisitions, which might have carried him away from his direct object. Certainly, he has found that not to be a barren occupation by which he has got an insight into the various phases which Christianity has assumed, and which were, so to speak, gone through beforehand in the apostle's experience.

A tabular view is appended. But before closing, I would devote a few lines to the probability of 2 Timothy having been written a considerable time after the others, and apparently after a recent journey from Asia Minor.

The reader will remember that I have suggested the isolation of Ephesians from Colossians and Philemon, notwithstanding the similarity of the truths in the two epistles, which would make us think they were written almost at the same moment. Upon this supposition Tychicus accompanied Onesimus with the Colossian epistle, and went another time to Ephesus, whether with or without the Ephesian epistle; Timothy being with the apostle when Tychicus went to Colosse, but not when he went to Ephesus.

Supposing the order to be as I have indicated, we want a considerable time between Colossians and 2 Timothy (still isolating Ephesians) to allow for the apostasy of Demas, the release of Aristarchus, the bringing back of Marcus, who had not as yet reached Colosse, where that letter was written (compare Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11), and for the general isolatedness in which we find the apostle at the last. We must find time for all this, and either do it by allowing a gap between Colossians and 2 Timothy, during the whole of which time he was in prison, and had been brought before Nero, his circumstances having become gradually worse; or else we must send him on another journey. I now give briefly the proofs of this, although still allowing difficulties, which perhaps I see better than my reader. Are not the very solemn and final warnings to Timothy inconsistent with the simple doctrinal statements in Colossians? The apostle's mind appears in the interim to have undergone a great revolution. But, space enough being given, all this is compatible with his not having left Rome. Does not, however, verse 13, “The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus.... bring with thee.” “Erastus abode at Corinth; but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick,” look as if he had just come from Troas? And does not “Erastus abode at Corinth,” seem as if his route had been the ordinary one, that is, from Corinth to Macedon, then to Troas and Miletus? Now we know that on his last recorded journey Trophimus (Acts 20:4) had accompanied and had gone on with him past Miletus even to Jerusalem, and was (Acts 21:29) partly cause of the disturbance there. If even we could get over this difficulty, and make this account serve for an account of himself when he first reached Rome, it carries on the face of it so many discrepancies that it will not stand: for the account of his earlier detention at Rome makes one suppose that it was a very mild one (Acts 28:17, 31); whereas this letter to Timothy describes himself as in prison, and as having once stood before the emperor, all men having forsaken him.

For these reasons it seems best to suppose that Paul did get a release from Rome (his history in the Acts of the Apostles not going down nearly so far); that on this release he made a journey, which took in Corinth, Troas, and Miletum.

By supposing such a journey, we can account for his desiring Philemon to prepare him a lodging (ver. 27), trusting that through his prayers be (Paul) should be given unto him.

If then he was released, his journey could hardly have occupied two years, time would have been given for the forsaking of Demas, for his sad discovery that “All they which are in Asia be turned away from me” (2 Tim. 1:15), and for the general tone of despondency regarding the falling away of his friends from himself and from the truth, which had come about during his long imprisonment.

As in the table I have put a query after Galatians and Ephesians, it may be worth while to point out some marks by which my reader may exercise an independent judgment as to their place. I have little to add about Galatians. In point of evidence it might have been written at any time, and its general curtness and absence of names and salutations may be accounted for by the irritation, if I may so speak, under which it was penned. Only we must remember that the failure so largely depicted is rather ignorant than willful on their part, and has reached them from a well-understood Jewish inroad, rather than from deliberate attacks on the part of the enemy within, and the apostle was hoping, as it would seem for a general recovery, even although those who brought in the error were cut off. Now as we find him in great conflict with the Jews throughout Acts 18, in which chapter he goes into Galatia for the second time, I think it likely it may have been written after that visit, this constant opposition having forced him into the mastery of the whole subject of law and grace. It is not unlikely that his breach with Barnabas was an epoch in his life, and may have delivered him from trammels, the power of which until then he had felt. If my surmise of its being written after this second visit to Galatia be correct, my reader will see that it must be placed after the two Epistles to the Thessalonians.

Now with regard to Ephesians, a question or two must be asked. First, what bearing will the omission of “at Ephesus” have as to forming an opinion of its historical order? Secondly, what relation do Colossians and Ephesians bear to one another, and which is the more general? Answering these questions, the omission of “at Ephesus” would leave us at liberty to look upon the epistle as a general one—so general as to be considered a circular whether as a last legacy or not to faithful Gentiles in the mass, and an anchor to which they might hold in the midst of an incoming apostasy. In answer to the second question, Ephesians is the more general writing, and Colossians a special example of the use of it, or an enlargement of a particular part of it. But the two Epistles are correlative, or one might say, complementary, the Ephesians being a treatise on the body, the Church, whilst that to the Colossians is on the Head, and therefore they must be read together, whilst still each had its own salient points. But this is quite compatible with Ephesians being more general and Colossians more particular; for the apostle, fearing the Colossians were falling into the state of “not holding the Head,” writes a particular treatise of what the Head, Christ, is and ought to be to them. Afterward he writes a more general treatise or last legacy to the whole Gentile church or churches. I am constrained to say “afterward” (however much in the general one would prefer the general statement to precede the particular example), because in feeling one's way along this intricate path two only kind of landmarks have directed us: first, the names of persons mentioned in the epistles themselves; secondly, the character of these writings. Now it appears to me that the first kind of landmark is plainer than the other; that is, Paul in writing his very last letter, namely, 2 Timothy, especially mentions his having sent Tychicus to Ephesus, and in the letter itself he says that Tychicus “shall make known to you all things.” He therefore, as I judge, bore this general letter to a circle of churches, of which the principal was

Ephesus. In this way too, that is, by omitting “in Ephesus,” we account for such expressions as “after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus.” “If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you ward” —unaccountable language if addressed to a church, among whom he had labored personally for years; but which passages admit of a solution when one allows that the letter may have been a general one.

But on such points, and indeed on the whole inquiry, this paper is only tentative, and glad should I be, if it elicited the criticism of those more versed in the subject. W.

NAMES|FROM| WHENCE|WRITTEN.|BY| WHOM|SENT.|

In the

Order of Writing|According to accompanying paper.|Textus Receptus and Vulgate.|Syriac.|Acccording to accompanying paper.|Textus Receptus and Vulgate.|Syriac.|

1 Thessalonians|Corinth |Athens |Athens | | |Timothy? |

2 Thessalonians |Corinth|Athens |Laodicea in Pisidia.| | |Tychicus?|

Galatians? | |Rome |Rome | | ||

1 Corinthians|Ephesus|Philippi|Ephesus|Timothy?|Stephanas Fortunatus Achaicus and Timothy. ||

1 Timothy|Macedonia |Laodicea capital of Phrygia Pacatiana. |Laodicea | | ||

Titus |Macedonia |Nicopolis |Nicopolis |Apollos? | |Zenas and Apollos? |

2 Corinthians |Philippi |Philippi |Philippi |Titus & Luke |Titus & Luke |Titus? |

Romans |Corinth |Corinth |Corinth|Phebe|Phebe|Phebe|

Hebrews |Cesarea or Italy |Italy | | | ||

| | | | | ||

Philippians |Rome |Rome |Rome |Epaphroditus |Epaphroditus |Epaphroditus? |

Colossians |Rome |Rome |Rome |Tychicus and Onesimus. |Tychicus and Onesimus. |Tychicus? |

Philemon |Rome |Rome |Rome|Ditto |Ditto|Onesimus?|

Ephesians|Rome, after a release? |Rome |Rome |Tychicus|Tychicus|Tychicus|

2 Timothy|Rome, after a second imprisonment|Rome, after being brought before Nero a second time|Rome| | | |

Chapter 178

Perfect

Matt. 19:21

This word “perfect” seems to intimate that character of mind which is answerable to God in the given place or dispensation He is at the time occupying.

“I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect.” Abram had just failed in acting according to the all-sufficiency and might of Him who had revealed Himself to him as the Quickener of the dead; he had taken Hagar through unbelief. He was therefore imperfect, not in company with the character in which God was dealing with him. (Gen. 17:1.)

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” The divine perfection here is that of paternal goodness, of One who gives without respect to the worthiness of the object. Our perfection is like-mindedness with this, doing good, and wishing well to others, though they may hate and curse and despitefully use us. (Matt. 5)

The Apostle Paul's use of the term is the same, as I judge. “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect.” And again, “Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect be thus minded.” (1 Cor. 2; Phil. 3) He speaks in reference to those who have, if I may so express it, the mind of the dispensation. The Corinthian saints came short of that when they were valuing something beside the wisdom of “Christ crucified;” and the Philippians would come short of it (in another character of it) if they were not pressing up the hill, saying (as a sweet fervent hymn expresses it, eyeing the angels ascending Jacob's ladder), “Nearer, my God, to Thee; nearer to Thee.” And so I say as to the use of the same word in Matt. 19:21.

The Lord had been in heaven on the holy hill, His Spirit seems still to be there from chapters 17 to 20; for He takes up subjects and looks at objects in the light of heavenly glory. In His judgment on the law of marriage, for instance, which opens this chapter (xix.), we find His thoughts in connection with God and not with Moses, with the garden of Eden before the fall, where the mystery of Christ and the Church had been foreshadowed—that mystery which is to be realized in heaven. And so in leading the rich young man far beyond the requisition of law, and in leading Peter and the disciples by the parable of the laborers in the vineyard far beyond the computations of the mere moral sense, we find the heavenly mind in Him still. (See chap. 15, 20:16.)

For what is perfection here? “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me.” This is the perfection here delineated and demanded. And this is that perfection which suits the heavenly calling, which alone is answerable to those dispensational thoughts which at that moment were filling His mind, as I have suggested. This perfection is, indeed, too high for anything else; but however we may fail in presenting it, it is the only thing answerable to, or worthy of, such a challenge. Jesus had already been in heaven. The glory that shone there was now everything to Him. And what rule could He prescribe less than the surrender of the whole earth, when in sight of the heavenly glory and the holy hill?

Peter, I may add, was thus perfect, when he was on the hill; he saw the glory and he forgot everything but it. “Master,” says he, “it is good for us to be here, let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.” He would fain abide there, forgetting all he had known and valued before, all on the earth. Now this was a sample of the perfection which the Lord here prescribes to the rich young man. I do not say that we are debtors to Peter's heart, so to speak, for this utterance of his lips on the hill of glory; it was rather the power of the place which spoke in him. But this makes it the more significant. The heavenly glory was of so commanding a character that when it really shone out it displaced everything. It makes a man “perfect” in that perfection which sells all and follows Jesus, a condition of heart which is alone worthy of it.

The Hebrew saints, I may say, knew of this perfection, when, in the day of their illumination, they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods because they knew of their heavenly inheritance. (Heb. 10) This perfection was finely illustrated there. But how quickly does the poor heart forget the holy hill! Peter himself forgot it, perhaps, in measure when he spoke as in verse 27 of this chapter. But Jesus, the living model of all perfection, retained it in His spirit, saying, “sell all, and come, follow me.” (Ver. 21.)

Chapter 179

Notes on Philippians 1-4

The Epistle to the Philippians presents the development of two distinct subjects. On the one hand it shows us the ties of affection which exist between the Lord's servant and those to whom he had been blessed; and on the other, Christian experience. It is perhaps the only epistle which treats of the experience of the Christian. We thus see the completeness of God's word; in it every subject has its own proper place.

Chapter 1:5-7. “I have you in my heart;” it ought to be translated, “ye have me in your hearts.” The meaning of this verse is this: “It is righteous for me to think thus as to you (that is, that I should have confidence in the completing of the good work begun in you), since ye have me in your hearts.”

“Ye all are partakers of my grace;” this signifies that they were all participators in the grace that rested on him. Every one has not a gift of ministry; but, by grace, whoever loves the Lord participates in the gospel.

Verse 10. “That ye may approve things that are excellent” —that is, the best, the most excellent. There may be a regular walk, which does not perhaps show enough of that delicacy and regard which the love of Christ teaches, and by which God is glorified.

Verse 11. “The fruit of righteousness” —that is, such fruit as would have been found in the life of Christ Himself.

Verse 12. “The things which happened unto me for the furtherance of the gospel.” All the difficulties resulting from Paul's absence only turned out for good: Christ was more abundantly preached; the Philippians were taking courage, the gospel was carried before Caesar, &c. And Paul was rejoicing when he saw that the efforts of Satan were contributing to the progress of the gospel.

Verse 16. Who are the preachers pointed out in this verse? All that is said is, that they preached Christ in a bad spirit. They might be persons who bad too little spirituality to dare to act when Paul was present, but availed themselves of his absence to come forward.

Verse 19. “For I know that this shall turn to my salvation” —that is, shall contribute to my final victory over the enemy.

Does not the apostle refer in these words to the hope he had of being delivered from his bonds? I do not think he does. The word “salvation” is used for our complete deliverance, and not merely for passing deliverances which we may experience by the way. Salvation is an absolute thing; it is the final result of the race. It is well to maintain the sense of this word; because we have here the key to the whole epistle. If there is not a salvation at the end of the race, of what avail is the priesthood of Christ?

Verses 20, 21. The same subject. Whatever may be Caesar's decision about me—whatever may await me, be it life or death, it works salvation to me, says the apostle: my race is accomplished through such circumstances. If life be left me, I will labor for the Church; if death be my portion, I will die for Christ, for His name; as to this Christ will decide. As regarded himself, Paul wished to die. Having death before him, be had, so to speak, attained his Gethsemane; and he had thus confidence that the Christ who had been glorified in his life would be also glorified in his death.

Verse 21. “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Christ was all in Paul's life. If Paul lived, it was by Christ and for Christ. Therefore to die would be better; be would then be more entirely with Him.

Verses 25, 26. Paul decides his own case; he decides it in the sense of the good and profit of the Church. Neither Caesar nor his court would decide it, but Christ; and He would do it in the interest of the Church. Paul in this shows the most elevated faith.

Verse 27. “The faith of the gospel.” In this expression Paul personifies the gospel. He sees the gospel carrying on warfare in the world, and the saints carrying on warfare for Christ, associating it with that person. The Epistles of Paul present several instances in which the gospel is thus personified.

Verse 28. “Of salvation.” Here again salvation is looked at as the result of the race.

Verses 29, 30. Paul on one side, the Philippians on the other, were in the warfare, and they had—all of them—salvation before them.

Chapter 2. We see further on that the Philippians had sent help to Paul. While expressing his satisfaction, he insinuates, but with caution, that they might have done so sooner. (Chap. iv. 10.) Here, with the same delicacy, he says, If it be true that there are any bowels and mercies, if it be true that ye have my joy at heart, fulfill ye that joy, by thinking the same thing, &c.

Verses 3, 4. Above all else, the heart of Paul desired that unity might be maintained among the saints; and, as a means of maintaining happy harmony, he recommends humility, which teaches the Christian to esteem himself to be least of all.

Verse 5. Paul, doubtless, will find an echo in the hearts of the Philippians, but he wished to give them higher motives than those which related only to himself. To this end he places before their eyes the humiliation of the Lord Jesus, who, being God, yet became man and servant; and was obedient even unto the death of the cross.

Verses 5-11. In these verses, although the thing is not said in express terms, there is, it seems to me, a contrast between Christ and Adam. Adam—man—in wishing to exalt himself to be like God, was disobedient unto death; Christ—who was God—emptied Himself, taking the form of a man, and, even when He was in the form of a man, became obedient and obeyed even unto death. There are two degrees in Christ's humiliation—He first strips Himself of His own glory, and becomes a man; then, being man, He goes down even unto the death of the cross.

Verse 10. “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.” The name of Jesus is a personal name—Jah-Oshua (Jehoshua)—Jehovah—Savior. It is the name of His person. The name “Christ” expresses a title—that of a man who is anointed. Independently of any title, Jesus

possesses His own proper personal claim to supremacy over all things. He is God. The divinity of Jesus occupies in the New Testament a much greater place than is generally observed.

But as man Jesus has also a glory which He receives, the glory which results from His humiliation" God also hath highly exalted him."

All things are subjected under the lordship of Christ—things heavenly, and earthly, and infernal (which are under the earth). This third class has no part in the reconciliation of "all things," as they are mentioned in Col. 1:20.

Verses 12,13. The emphasis in verse 12 is on these words: "not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence." If, Paul being absent and retained in prison, the Philippians were deprived of him, God would suffice; He is never absent.

"Work out your own salvation" —not your acceptance, but your salvation. Apply yourselves to the things which become persons who look for salvation. Be watchful, lest anything should lead you out of your way, for your path is strewed with difficulties. Here, as in the preceding instances, salvation is looked at as at the end of the race. We never find in the Epistle to the Philippians that the Christian is viewed as possessing that which is a matter of faith—a very remarkable thing; unless we discern in it the believer on his way and striving for salvation, it is unintelligible.

Paul, when he was called, saw the Lord in glory. He knew that he would one day be in that glory with his Master, and like Him. Hence, until he reached this, he felt that nothing could entirely satisfy him, and, moved by heavenly affections, he pressed on towards that blessed moment.

The Christian, through grace, is placed on the same road. At the starting-point he is reconciled with God: and that reconciliation has become in its turn the starting-point for his other blessings. Now the Lord, in calling that Christian with a heavenly calling, has put into his heart spiritual affections; grace has formed a relationship between the Christian who is on earth and Jesus who is on high. But if this blessed relationship is not sustained, the heavenly affections in the heart of a child of God become dormant and cold affections. The assurance of salvation might remain perhaps, but isolated: all spiritual affections are lost.

"With fear and trembling." We meet with difficulties on the road, though indeed we are sure to arrive. Although the race be not the title of our acceptance, still that race is none the less a serious and important thing. What a privilege and what an honor to be God's instruments in the conflict engaged with Satan. But what a responsibility also! One cannot stand firm in this conflict if one is careless, if we act in a bad spirit, if we yield to the flesh, &c.

Verse 14. Translate, "Without murmurings and reasonings."

Verse 15. Translate, "Ye appear as lights."

Verse 17. It is, "If also I am poured out as a libation."

Verses 25—30. What a contrast between the feelings of Paul and those which he knew to exist in the Philippians respecting Epaphroditus, with the man of ice to which one has reduced Christianity in these days. How quick and coldly one says of a departed Christian: "He is happy." Of course Epaphroditus, if he had died of his sickness, would have departed happy to be in the bosom of

Jesus. And Paul would assuredly have been resigned in seeing the departure of his brother; but his recovery filled Paul's heart with joy.

Chapter 3. This chapter forms a kind of parenthesis, at least after the first verses. Paul interrupts the subject of brotherly intercourse to give us the beautiful developments on the heavenly calling, which we notice in this portion of the epistle. He then draws from those developments some teaching for the Philippians; and by this he comes to chapter iv., the exhortations and spiritual communications of which form a sequel to those of chapter ii.

Verse 2. “Beware of dogs.” That is, of those who do evil shamelessly.

Verse 3. We see in this verse three features which characterize the service of the Christian. One worships God in Spirit, not in carnal ceremonies; one boasts in Christ Jesus, and not in man; one has the Lord, and therefore no confidence in the flesh.

Verses 4-6. The flesh finds means, even in the things instituted by God, to do many things in order to exalt oneself.

Verse 7. Paul's doctrine presents the abiding fact, that the last Adam has all superiority over the first, and the Spirit over the flesh. One cannot retain anything of the first Adam without detriment to the last.

Verses 7, 8. Always that which is before— “to gain Christ” —to reach unto Him. Had Paul reached Christ? Not absolutely. As to his soul, he had; he is with the Lord; but not as to the body. The resurrection has not yet taken place.

Verse 8. “I have suffered the loss of all things.” What things? Those which the flesh values—things like those which the apostle tells us he had given up.

Verse 9. “Found in him.” When? Rather at the end of the race.

Having “the righteousness which is of God.” To be in Christ in order to have that righteousness, and not to possess righteousness as a means to get Christ. Such is the order in which things present themselves to Paul when it is a question of the heavenly calling and of the race. Mark well, he wished not for the righteousness of the law, not because he cannot attain to it (which, however, would be true); but because in Christ he had something better than that. The righteousness of the law, had he been able to attain to it, would hinder him possessing Christ—so he will not have it.

Verses 9, 10 present two things: to be in Him; and to know Him.

Verse 10. Paul points out in this verse the means by which he would arrive at the resurrection from among the dead and attain Christ. When he has laid hold of the power of the resurrection, he can pass through death, and not before.

Verse 12. A fact which precedes all others is that before taking a single step in this path Paul had been taken possession of by Christ. He had been taken possession of by Jesus Christ—for Jesus Christ.

Verse 14. “Toward the mark” —always this aim—the glorious Christ towards whom the race tends.

Verses 15, 16. The degree to which one has attained in the knowledge of Christ—is not the rule of unity; the saints must be able to walk together, whatever difference there may be between them as to the extent of that knowledge. Let not the strong in receiving the weak require from him a state to which he has himself attained; and let not the weak lay down the limit unto which he has arrived, as the rule for others. Let us walk together; and as to that which goes beyond the measure to which we have attained, God will teach us.

Could it be that a Christian might not finish his course? In some respects it might so happen; or, at least, the course would not be finished in the way that was intended. Nevertheless, such a case was foreseen in God's counsels. Ananias and Sapphira furnish perhaps a similar instance. There are some who make shipwreck, who fail as to faith, as to the doctrine that faith receives, without its being said on that account that they had abandoned their faith. Having in view this danger, Paul recommended Timothy to maintain faith and a good conscience; to hold fast the truth of God as well as that uprightness of heart in which the soul judges itself, and abides in the presence of God ever open under His eye. If a good conscience fails, the enemy finds an entrance, and faith is in danger.

There is a crown of righteousness promised to those who love the Lord's appearing. Why is it called a crown of righteousness? Because it will be given to those to whom it is righteous to give it, “which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me.” (2 Tim. 4:8.) “God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed towards his name.” (Heb. 6:10.)

Verses 18, 19. Who are the many whose walk made Paul weep?” They are rather professors than real Christians; those perhaps in the beginning of the chapter. I should feel a difficulty in saying in an absolute way as applying it to Christians— “Whose end is destruction.”

These two verses have this importance, that they may indicate the period when Christendom will have gone beyond Christianity. We see in the First Epistle to Corinthians that the saints are warned of this danger. (Chap. 10.) And in this epistle we find that the very presence of evil is already stated.

Verses 20, 21. Here again salvation is presented as a future thing. “We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus.” He is coming in glory, to receive us into that glory. That is the goal towards which we run.

Chapter iv. Paul now returns to exhortations.

Verse 3. “Thee also, true yokefellow.” It was, doubtless, the one who carried the letter, Epaphroditus. Literally, “Help them [those] who have contended along with me.” It is a recommendation to help the women who had contended in the Gospel. Euodia and Syntyche were of that number.

Verse 7. “The peace of God shall keep your hearts.” The peace of God is that peace in which God Himself is. We read, not that our hearts keep that peace, but that it keeps our hearts.

Verses 8, 9. In walking according to the exhortations of the apostle, the Philippians would find God with them—the God of peace.

Verse 10. “Your care of me hath flourished again.” It is a slight reproach, which Paul softens by adding, “wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.”

Verses 12, 13. It is often in a very abstract way that one says, “I can do all things.” While Paul says, “I can do all things,” he adds, “I have learned,” “I am instructed.”

Verse 19. “My God” —that faithful God, whose faithfulness Paul had felt so often. It is with this feeling of gratitude that Paul says, “My God.”

REMARKS.

In the race which the Lord has opened to faith, the Christian finds himself individually engaged, and his responsibility finds its place. The Christian, it is true, is no longer before God in the condition of a man with his sins. But in virtue of the new position which grace has made unto him, he has entered upon a new and different responsibility. He has practically to answer all the privileges which are vouchsafed to him. He has to walk in the Spirit, to press towards the goal, to show himself worthy of his calling, and as a child of God to walk in love, &c.

The day of Christ will show in what manner that child of God has run. It is while he runs the race that he has to watch lest anything should stop him, or turn him aside from his road. He meets with hindrances, and may perhaps find them even in the unfaithful state of God's people. It is for him to watch; the delay of others could not justify His own; the race is an individual thing.

Nevertheless, in the Book of Numbers, which presents the going through the wilderness, do we not see a people on their march? This is true; but we must observe that in the heavenly calling, of which we are partakers, God has formed a relationship with each of His saints; and that relationship is infinitely more developed than it could have been with the Israelites in the wilderness.

The reward at the end of the race is never the motive given to make us enter on the course; it is an encouragement to persevere when one is already engaged therein. Jesus Himself knew these encouragements “Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.” (Heb. 12)

Notes on Philippians 1-4

The Epistle to the Philippians looks at the Christian as on a journey with an object before him, and that object the actual winning of Christ, the laying hold of that for which he had been laid hold of by Christ; and therefore salvation is looked at as a thing to be attained—the Christian reaching in result what he had laid bold on before by faith.

Chapter 1 is an introduction. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 present to us three aspects of Christian life.

In chapter 2 we see the gracious mind that was in Christ, illustrated in the servants and the saints also: in chapter 3 the energy of the apostle in running after the prize: and in chapter 4 his complete superiority over all circumstances. In all of it it is the experience which is the result of the power of the Spirit of God acting in the Christian—no idea of failure.

We do not get sin mentioned throughout the epistle. There were a few things that needed setting right: for instance, the two women in chapter 4 needed exhorting to be of the same mind, they

were in a little discord; but what is described is the effect of the Spirit's power. Sin is not mentioned. Nevertheless I suppose the Thessalonian saints were in the freshest condition of any we read of, as we find the epistle was written to them only about two months or the like after their conversion, so that their first love was in activity.

There was real devotedness in the gospel amongst the Philippians, which the apostle does not omit noticing, nor forget their kindness now renewed. (See chap. 4:15, 16, and 1:3, and 7 where read “ye have me,” not “I have you.") And this gave him confidence as to them, as well as regarded himself, that He who had begun the good work would accomplish it unto the day of Christ. There the work is still viewed as one reaching on to its great result. As to himself this confidence was most blessed, and accompanied by, and in some respects the fruit of, a conscience kept in the full light of God's countenance by the Spirit of God. “As always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body.” Self is always shut out when grace is really known and enjoyed.

Paul was not occupied at all with his outward life, but with the inward life. He had Christ always before him, and when it was a question of which he would choose, whether to go to be with Christ or to remain on the earth, he is in a strait; if he dies, it is to be with Christ; and if he remains, it is worth while, for here he can labor for the Church's good, and through the blessedness of both paths he knows not which to choose, so that self is done away as a motive. Blessed state! And then the blessing of the saints is his motive under Christ, and so he remains as more needful for them. You see it is Christ that decides thus the result, and he decides his own case: for if it be better for the Church he should remain, Christ was over all—he would remain. It is not the reckless Nero nor any one else; it is a question with Paul what most pleases Christ. He never thinks of the circumstances which he was in—nigh unto death, he has got his eye only on Christ. To die would be gain to any Christian, and so would “to live be Christ.” But there is a difference between an abstract truth and the practical realization of that truth: like Paul, in the Acts, when before Agrippa, he could say, “I would that all that hear me this day were altogether like me, except these bonds.” We know any one could say that, for it would be better that all were saved; but it is a very different thing to be in Paul's condition, and say it with his spirit.

In verse 10, where the expression “the day of Christ” occurs, it means the day when He comes to judge; it is always so when it refers to our responsibility; it never means the rapture of the Church when it speaks of saints' responsibility, as in 1 Tim. 6:13, 14, “I give thee charge that thou keep this commandment without spot until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We could not connect the rapture with responsibility. We are all alike caught up together, and alike conformed to the image of God's Son. It is the result of grace for every saint; but the rewards will be according to the fruits and works, as in John 15, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” And the Christian is not merely called on to avoid open evil, but to have spiritual discernment, so as to understand what is excellent, more conformed to the divine mind. This makes verse 10 of chapter 1 a very important one.

Verse 12 brings out the power over circumstances. It did not matter what position Paul was in: he always reckoned on the power of Christ.

Then a word as to verse 6. It is a great comfort to know that what God has begun He is going to complete; and it was Paul's confidence towards the Philippian saints, because they had him in

their heart, as verse 7 tells us. This made it but just for him to judge the divine life was working in them; but then there was this deep comfort for the love that was in his heart, and freshly awakened in it: but then that was God's work, and He would complete it. This verse should be read according to the margin, and not as translated in the text. The apostle was in their hearts, and it was a proof to him of divine life.

It is beautiful to see how Christ is the sole object before the apostle. It matters not though it be in contention that He is preached, so that Christ was preached. “I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.” A person who is converted may walk in a manner that does not dishonor Christ, but it is a different thing to have Christ as the motive for everything; and if the latter condition be that of the soul, it always raises the mind above sorrow. For the thought that Christ was preached of contention might cause sorrow in the apostle's heart, but he is above that because Christ is preached.

Where there is not real spiritual energy, the thought of prison cows people; and when Satan managed to get the great preacher of Christ there, he thought he had gained his end; but they “got courage as to his bonds.” Paul was so identified with the gospel that when the gospel succeeded it was to him success; and in that day the gospel was not made to suit people as it is in this day. Paul was nothing terrified by his adversaries; as Peter also says, “As long as ye are not afraid with any amazement.” Satan tries to cow people and make them shy.

When the apostle speaks of the gospel or the vocation, as in chapter 1:27, he means the whole thing (Christianity). The word conversation in this verse refers to one's walk.

“To them an evident token of perdition.” For when Satan's power is fully exercised, and it is seen that it has no power over Paul or any servant of Christ, it is manifested that it has met One which is superior to itself, that is, a divine One, and that they who oppose are its adversaries; and thus it is a token of perdition to them, and for the same reason of salvation to those helped by divine power; for still salvation in the epistle is the result in victory. Then in verse 29 we see that “it is given not only to believe, but to suffer for his sake.”

And now we come to the end of chapter 1, which is a kind of introduction to the epistle.

Chapter 2 is full of instruction. It is very touching the way the apostle speaks in this chapter. They had sent him help from a long way, and sought to minister to his wants; but he says if they want to make him truly happy, to fulfill his joy, they must all be walking like Christ; they must be of one mind. How gentle and courteous a way of dealing with them is this, in the presence of their love and kindness to him! He could not harshly reprove, but love would not have the evil uncorrected, and deals thus delicately as to it. “If there be any consolation in Christ,” &c., “fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded.” He sets Christ before them as an example; and he could say too, “Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ,” not “as far as I follow Christ;” but I am following Christ, and I want you to copy my example and follow Him too.

Then in verses 3 and 4 of this chapter, each is exhorted to “esteem each other better than himself.” Now there will be no difficulty in this if we are really walking before God; we shall be occupied with each other's good, and the one will esteem the other better than himself; because when the soul is really before the Lord, it will see its own shortcomings and imperfections, and will be in self-judgment; and according to the love and spirit of Christ see all the good that is from Him

in a brother, and one dear to Him, and will therefore look upon his fellow—Christian as better than himself, and so all would be in beautiful harmony; and we should be looking after each other's interests too. As I have often remarked, Love likes to be a servant, and selfishness likes to be served.

Then, in verses 5-8, we get the humiliation of Jesus even unto death, though not in the sense of atonement, nor of patience of suffering put upon Him, but in voluntary humiliation, the way and pattern of lowliness for our souls, producing the graciousness which becomes the Christian and adorns his life. This in contrast with the first Adam. He sought to be exalted when in the form of man, and that by robbery: he ate that which was forbidden, to become equal with God; but the last Adam, when in the form of God (though He thought it not robbery to be equal with God as to His dignity,) left all and came down here to be a man, and in the form of a servant; and then as a man humbled Himself, and became obedient to death. God looks for us to walk in the character of the last Adam and not of the first—that of humbling and not of exalting. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ.” Thus a self-humbling Christ, the mind that was in Him, is the source of Christian graciousness and consideration for others: and this will be found exemplified in Paul's way of dealing with them, and all that follows as to Timothy and Epaphroditus, where Christian love is so sweetly insisted on as well as shown. In chapter iii., on the other hand, Paul sees Christ up in the glory, and is running after Him, giving its energy to the Christian life, as in chapter ii. he sees Him on the earth as the brightest example of lowliness; and as the result of that lowliness God gives Him a name which is above every name: this is given to Him as Son of man. The mind that was in Christ was the mind of coming down, and that is what the apostle wants to see in us. There is no place where Christ is so glorified as at the cross, although it was in shame. In the glory we shall be with Him and like Him, though there would have been no glory for us without the cross. But who could have been with Him on the cross? There He was wholly alone with God.

The word “Lord” is used in two distinct senses in the New Testament; in some places it means “Jehovah,” and in others made “Lord and Christ,” as Lord over all; as in Acts 10 He is “Lord of all.” This is the sense in which it is used in chapter 2:11. Of course we know that He is Jehovah, as in John 12, where the quotation is made from Isa. 6, “I saw the Lord,” &e. There you get Him as Jehovah, and often in the Old Testament. In truth the second person of the Godhead is He in whom Jehovah is revealed there. We may see how the three persons are closely connected all through the acts of Christ, even in the miracles—Christ as Son wrought the miracles; but it is said,” The Father that is in me, he doeth the works;” and also, “If by the Spirit of God I cast out demons.” So we see the three inseparably united, as in the resurrection of Christ also. We find in chapter ii. of John's gospel, Christ speaking of raising Himself. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again.” Then we read in another scripture, “Whom God raised from the dead;” and last, “He was quickened by the Spirit.” All God's glory was engaged in the resurrection of Christ.

In the Epistles of John you cannot separate Christ and God. The apostle speaks of Christ both as God and Christ in the very same sentence, as in 1 John 2:28 and 3: 1: “Abide in him; that when he shall appear... at his coming;” that is Christ, born of Him. Verse 29, the same person is God, as is manifest from chapter 3:1; “him not” is Christ; “he shall appear,” now it is Christ again, and so all verses 2 and 3. Thus be calls Him God and Christ in the same verse, and there are other similar instances in this epistle. We see this divine union in the words of Christ Himself, for He says in John's gospel, “'The Son of Man, who is in heaven,” although He was then actually on earth at the

time. The word “Jehovah” refers to the three persons of the gospel, which men rightly call the Trinity.

The New Testament is the opening out of the unity of the Godhead in the Trinity of the persons. Christ was here as God as well as man, and His person cannot be divided. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Of course it is spiritually that this is true; but nevertheless it is our privilege to rejoice in His presence as that very Jesus who shed His blood for us. It is not the Spirit's presence, though He must be present that we may enjoy Christ's. But the Spirit has not died, suffered, and walked amongst us as Jesus did. The Holy Ghost is present, and reveals the Father's love and Christ Himself to us, and thus the Holy Ghost is the power in us, and the Father and the Son are they with whom we have fellowship; and this is the reason why we do not pray to the Holy Ghost. His place, in the ways of grace, is to be in us; the Father and the Son are the objects by His revelation of them before the soul.

Chapter 2: 12. I would just notice the way in which people have blundered with reference to this verse, which they think conveys the idea of a person working himself to obtain eternal life in contrast with God's working, insisting on the words “work out your own.” It is altogether mistaken. The apostle had been with them and had cared for them, had worked for them, kept at bay the power of the enemy, meeting the difficulties of the warfare, but that was not to continue; He now being in prison and having left them, they had to work out their salvation; that is, they would now have to fight their own battles, and have their own conflicts, which Paul felt was a very solemn thing; they were to do it “with fear and trembling,” and I am sure we shall all feel it a solemn thing, if we have a right apprehension of it, when we think of the great powers that are against us—the world, the flesh, and Satan; and are having to make God's cause and maintain by grace our own standing (learning too the conflict of flesh and Spirit). It is indeed a solemn thing to know that we are the vessels of a conflict between God and Satan. But it is no contrast between our working and God's; but our working and Paul's, who could no longer be in the conflict for them; but who adds, It is God who worked in them to will and to do—they had not lost Him. When Scripture speaks of my place in Christ as the result of accomplished redemption, there are no ifs or buts or warnings about it. These come when it looks at me as a Christian in the world under responsibility. And the Lord brings us through our trials and difficulties, but it is only to show us what is in ourselves and also to display what is in God, to abound over it all; as we see the passage of the children of Israel from the Red Sea to Canaan taught them many difficulties, but it also taught them the faithfulness of God: and when the journey through the wilderness was really finished, and they were come to the borders of the land, and were called to go up the mountain and enter into the land, their unbelief and distrust broke out, and they wanted Moses to send spies to see the land before they attempted to enter. Well, God permitted it, but what was the result? The very appearance of the place frightened them; the high walls, &c., staggered them; and they were afraid to go up. So Moses says, “Well, there is nothing but the wilderness for you;” and so they turned back. But, though chastening, God turned back with them. Surely it only brings out God's purpose of grace, as Moses told them in Deut. 8, it was to “humble thee and prove thee, to know what was in thine heart,” and also to show them what was in His. And He was above all their failure and shortcomings, taking care of them even to the nap of their coats. His ultimate result was blessing. “In all their afflictions he was afflicted.” I am sure it is a real conflict; but then we have the joy that “God works in us.” A man, who has been a very proud one, when he is really brokenhearted

before God, makes a humbler Christian than a man who never showed signs of pride at all; for he finds grace with God to be subdued, and manifests that grace with others; when he sees it rising, he knows what is rising, and therefore is ready with a check upon it.

Verses 14 and 15. In this latter verse each element of the exhortation is exactly what Christ was upon earth: blameless, harmless, Son of God, and without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, the light of the world, holding forth the word of life. It forms a lovely picture of Christ's path, and just what we are exhorted to be. So we hear Paul saying of himself what Christ could have said; “I endure all things for the elects' sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” This is a very wonderful thing to say. Real fellowship with Christ's sufferings was this, and we find Paul looking on the day, in verse 16, with joy at the time when the result of all would be manifested. It is then when rewards are distributed; it is not a question of salvation at all. Reward is connected with labor, not with salvation.

Verses 19-30. How sweet it is to see the gracious thoughtfulness of the apostle towards these saints. “I trust in the Lord to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.” You see he could say he would send Timotheus shortly; not so with Epaphroditus—he must send him at once, for they had heard he had been sick and were sorrowful, and so the apostle is careful to end that sorrow by sending Epaphroditus unto them. (Ver. 28.) In the last verse he seems to intimate that they had been a little careless about him. “Your lack of service,” and also in chapter iv. 10; and he gives a very gentle rebuke and corrects what he says by expressing his assurance of their loving care; not that he spoke in respect of want, for he knew how to be abased and how to abound. If it was a gift of love, he would gladly receive their gifts; but still the good of the gospel is in his mind. If as the Corinthians they attached great importance to their money, he would have nothing to do with it, be wanted not their money but their hearts.

In chapter iii. we see Paul, in his energetic spirit, running after a prize. Important warnings in verse 2. He will not allow these Judaisers to be the “circumcision” here, but “concision,” which was a word of contempt “we are the circumcision.”

Paul counts all dross and dung that he might win Christ. Oh what single-eyed energy for Christ! You see if Christ is so precious to me that everything else is dung and dross, it will be no difficulty for me to throw it aside; that is the secret—the power of an absorbing object to deliver me from all else. It is to the extent my heart values an object that it is a temptation to me. Suppose I have a very beautiful cloak on and I am running a race, if my heart is really occupied with the prize I shall not mind the beauty of the cloak; I shall only know it is a weight, and shall cast it off me, as we find in Hebrews, “laying aside every weight and the sin which cloth so easily beset.” There they are only looked at as weights that have simply to be thrown aside. Note this was not a mere passing effect with Paul when the glory of Christ first gleamed in upon him; but at the end of his course he could say, “And I do count them but dung that I may win Christ.” He kept up to it all through his course; and we shall do the same just to the extent our minds are on the prize; and first of all the prize to him was winning Christ Himself.

Verses 11, 12. Paul views his own glory as connected with it at the end of his journey. The resurrection is an object of attainment. He looked at all suffering too in the power of resurrection, which always makes suffering easy. He says It does not matter what I pass through, whether

death or anything else, so that I may get Him. “If by any means” —no matter what (ver. 11), if it costs me my life— “I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead;” not “of the dead,” but “from among the dead.” This was the difficulty in Mark 9:10. They reasoned what the resurrection from the dead meant. A general resurrection of the dead was common enough: every Pharisee or orthodox Jew held it; but one from the dead was a new thing altogether, and this is the character of the saint's resurrection. God delighted in Christ, and, therefore, raised Him from among the dead. He also delights in us and is going to raise us from among the dead.

We run a race, but not an uncertain one.

The “perfect” ones spoken of in verse 15 are those who have laid hold on the truth of being risen and glorified with Christ on high; not only knowing that my sins are just forgiven, but apprehending the higher truth of resurrection in Christ. And it is as these we are called to walk. This is the same perfection as is spoken of in 1 Cor. 2: “We speak wisdom to them that are perfect.” The only perfection the apostle has before him is to be like Christ in glory and not like the first Adam.

A person may more easily know his sins forgiven; but it is a further truth to know that he is himself “dead to sin.” He finds this conflicts with his experience—that does not affect his experience. Suppose I tell you a debt of a thousand pounds which you owed, was paid by some one, it would not be a question of experience, but of simply believing my statement. Just so with God, He tells us our sins are forgiven, and it is a question whether we believe Him; but when He tells us we are dead to sin, we look inside and say, “Ah, sin is still at work: how is that?” A person must be taught of God to know really the truth that he is dead to sin.

The rest of the Epistle is still simply experience—sitting loose to the world, caring about nothing but Christ, superiority over all circumstances; and the apostle concludes, “My God shall supply all your need” —my God, the One whom I have been learning, I count upon for all your wants.

Chapter 180

Philippians 1:21

Phil. 1:21.—Christ was the whole of Paul's life; for him to live was Christ, and to die gain; for he would gain Christ! It was what Paul realized.

Chapter 181

Thoughts on Philippians 4

It is a great thing to rejoice always. It is important to consider the apostle's own history in connection with these epistles. When he was writing this, he was in prison at Rome. He had been cut short in his ministry, and as he looked on, he had to say, “All they which are in Asia be turned away from me,” and “All seek their own,” &c.; and yet he had something which lifted his heart above it all; not that he was insensible to it, but he knew a superior power. It was looking at Christ he could rejoice, not in these circumstances. In one chapter in Galatians, he says, “I stand in doubt of you:” in the next, he says, “I have confidence in you through the Lord.”

The Lord's own path was the same, meeting with disappointments and distresses, on every hand, and yet He prays that the disciples may have His joy fulfilled in themselves. It is living in a power superior to evil, and if I am not living in that power, I shall be depressed and cast down by the stream of evil within and around me, instead of rejoicing always. To do this, it requires that the heart should be with Him who has already overcome and sat down.

The first mark of power is patience. Nothing troubled the peace of the apostle's soul, so that he is free enough to think of individuals—Euodias, &c. (verse 2)—or to write about a runaway slave. He was passing through the valley of Baca, making it a well. It is a more blessed thing to make trials causes for thanksgiving than our own mercies. “I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.” In all his many trying circumstances, he was finding that the Lord was sufficient. He possessed that internal happiness which enabled him to say, when before Festus, “I would to God” that you were “altogether such as I am.”

Are you so happy in your soul that you can say that? The young Christian rejoices in what he has got, his salvation, joy, peace, and so on. The old Christian rejoices more in Christ. The young Christian says, I have got this, I have got that; but the old Christian says, Christ is this, and Christ is that. Not that this is wrong in a young Christian: in that sense a young Christian cannot be an old one; but if they walk with God, they will soon ripen. Read 1 John 2:12-14: “I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning;” and while he goes into detail about the young men and babes, he repeats this of the old men.

There is the continual conflict with Amalek, but in the confidence that he has already been overcome. Read John 16:33: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Run the race “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith; who.... is set down,” &c. Do not let any evil or any circumstances prevent your rejoicing in the Lord always; but for this you must be with Him.

“Let your moderation,” &c. Naturally, I like to assert my rights in the world, and if I see injustice done, I like to resent it. Moderation is putting a check upon our own will, for the present content to be put upon this— “The Lord is at hand.” When the Lord set His face like a flint to go to Jerusalem, the Samaritans would not receive Him, and the disciples wanted to draw down fire upon them. If you set your face like a flint to go to Jerusalem, you will not be received by those who are

half-hearted. “The Lord is at hand.”

Do you believe that? The character of my whole life will be governed by this, if I believe it. You may say, I have troubles in my family; the saints are going wrong, &c. Well, “Be careful for nothing; but in everything,” &c. What do you want? Go and ask God about it. Instead of harassing your own mind about it, carry it to Him; and it is not said He will give you just what you ask, because that might not be for your good; but He gives you His peace. You put your cares into His heart, and He will put His peace into yours. Do all the things that trouble you disturb the peace of God? “With thanksgiving,” &c. When I put my affairs in persons' hands, and ask them to see to it for me, they undertake it, end I say, Thank you, although as yet they have done nothing in it. In this state of soul the heart is free to enjoy what I see in others. There is such a tendency in us to get living in the things of the world, where we could not have the heart of Christ with us.

Verse 9. You walk in the path you have learned of me, and the God of peace Himself shall be with you. Joy is an up and down thing, but peace is something constant and undisturbed. God is never called the God of joy, but often the God of peace.

While Christ was with His disciples, before His death, He never said to them, “Peace be unto you;” but He said, “Fear not.” But when He arose, He said “Peace be unto you.” Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross in such a way, that if God rises up in every attribute He possesses, He sees nothing to disturb His peace. I am in the light as He is in the light; and if I have conflict with the world, the flesh, and Satan, I have peace with God.

The test of the true condition of a person's soul is seen in his everyday life. “I have learned,” &c. Paul had learned it; it is not merely saying it. It is a much greater snare to abound than to be abased; but Christ was enough. I get not only peace in the circumstances, but also moral power over them.

“My God,” &c. That is as much as to say, I know Him well, and I will answer for it that He will supply all your need according to the riches of His glory. What a reality there is in the life of faith! He may put us through trials, because that is good for us, but He will be with us in them all.

Chapter 182

Philosophers and the Truth

Where superstition has bound down the will and degraded religion below the standard of natural conscience, it awaits only an adequate impulse from good or from evil to break the chains.

Chapter 183

Powers That Be—Capital Punishment

Human government, it has been justly said, finds its root in the authority which God conferred upon Noah. There was no such thing, properly speaking, in the antediluvian earth. Adam had a most extensive dominion, but no power over life. “And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man,” &c. (Gen. 1:26-28.) There was no authority delegated over man, nor even to deprive the least animal of its life. Hence it was that the murder of a brother did not draw down vengeance from man, though conscience dreaded the retributive blow from every hand. “The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground,” said the Lord to guilty Cain, and set a mark upon him, lest any should slay the fugitive. Then followed a long reign of gigantic and uncurbed wickedness. Finally, a preacher of righteousness was raised up who warned for the space of one hundred and twenty years, when God swept away the corruption and violence of the race in the waters of the deluge.

After that catastrophe, a new commission opens. Noah and his sons have the Adamic grant confirmed; but they have much more. Every moving thing that liveth, even as the green herb, should be meat for them, the blood thereof excepted. “And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man: at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man. And you, be ye fruitful,” &c. (Gen. 9:5-7.) Evidently, the world was then placed under new conditions, which, in their substance, continue and must subsist, till a new and yet future dealing of God change the face of all things, as may be gathered from 2 Peter 3 and other scriptures.

The principle, then, of the divine charge to Noah and his sons remains true and obligatory till the day of the Lord. Now what is its chief characteristic? Clearly it is God's committal of the sword, or the power of life and death, into the hands of man. “Whoso sheddeth man's blood, BY MAN shall his blood be shed.” Such is the true source and basis of civil government. It did not spring from social contract. It did not grow by degrees out of family relationships. It did not originate in the usurpation of a man or of a class. As God's command gave it being, so it can never cease to be clothed with His authority, whether men hear or forbear. If there be any one part of the charge which stands most prominent, it is the responsibility of man to visit capitally him who sheds man's blood. Such is the requirement of God, grounded upon the fact that He made man in His image. But though the reason of the thing might apply from Adam downwards, no such power was delegated till Noah. The notion, therefore, of its being, in any sort or degree, a right inherent in man, is thus cut off. It is a right of God, which He, ever since the flood, has been pleased to entrust to human keeping, which those in authority are bound to enforce in subjection to Him, and for the exercise of which they must by-and-by give account to Himself. (Psa. 82)

It is easy to say that God has withdrawn or quashed the commission given to Noah and His family. But I ask, where? when? how and await in vain the shadow of a proof.

Undoubtedly, God revealed other thoughts and hopes to the faith of Abraham and of his seed. With the fathers he entered into a new relationship—a covenant of grace and promise, as proved by Rom. 4 and Gal. 3—which did not clash with the previous bond signed, sealed, and delivered, if I may so say, to Noah and his sons. This was a covenant between God and the earth at large; that was a special covenant between God and His own people. By the one, the world's wickedness was kept in check; by the other, the wandering patriarchs walked as strangers in a land promised to them and their seed for an everlasting possession. The former menaced human violence, if need were, with death; the latter led the men who embraced its hopes, pilgrims on earth, under the guidance of a known and almighty Friend. The government of the earth proceeded in its own sphere, wide as all the families of the earth. The calling of Abraham and his seed had its proper and peculiar domain. Between them there was no confusion, much less contradiction.

It is true that, after the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, the principle of government, first committed to Noah, and that of God's call, first manifested in Abraham, were seen united. In that chosen people, separated from the Gentiles as His witness, God developed His ways as a Ruler. But alas! at Sinai, instead of confessing their sin, and pleading the absolute promises made to the fathers, they accepted the conditions of their own obedience. The result was ruin under all variety of circumstances: the law broken before it was brought down from the Mount, God Himself rejected, failure under priests—under prophets—under kings, “till there was no remedy,” and God at length gave them into the hands of their enemies. During their national existence in Canaan, none can pretend that God relieved Israel from the responsibility of punishing with death.

At the Babylonish captivity, God severed the principle of earthly rule from that of His call, transferring the former to the Gentiles. The four great empires appeared in succession, as Daniel and other inspired writers predicted and attested. The last, or Roman empire, bore sway, as is notorious, when our Lord was born and died, and God began to call His Church chosen from Jews and Gentiles as one body here below. But it is clear and certain, from the Acts of the Apostles and the rest of the New Testament, that the Church in no way interfered with the government of the earth, which God had placed in the hands of magistrates. They had, no doubt, to hear and to bear the reproach of turning the world upside down, and of doing contrary to the decrees of Caesar; but it was false. Christ's kingdom is not of this world. They knew it, they had it, and they did not want another. They remembered His own glowing words about them: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” And they waited for Him from heaven, assured that those who suffer shall also reign with Him. As they never resisted the authorities by force, so they sought in their teachings to uphold, not to weaken, the just place which God of old had assigned them.

Hence the Apostle Paul thus addressed the believers in the imperial city: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation” (rather, judgment, as also in 1 Cor. 11:29, where the context is decisively against the idea of “damnation"). “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is

evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger [or avenger] to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake," &c. (Rom. 13.) The reigning emperor was a pagan and a persecutor; but clearly this was not the question. The language of the Spirit is so framed as to exclude cavil, founded on either the profession or the practice of the ruler. "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." What can be conceived more definite on the one hand, more comprehensive on the other? What more opposed to revolutionary movement? It was most wholesome; just in the right place and time. For the Jews were then turbulent, and the Christians were obnoxious in the extreme to the ruling powers. It seems probable that some at Rome, from old Jewish associations, found it hard to own and respect, as of God, rulers whom they saw sunken in the spiritual and moral degradations of heathenism. Under such circumstances, if under any, one might have supposed a priori that God might have revoked the grant of power from its Gentile holders, if He did not transfer it to the Church. But no! The door is closed against every excuse. "The powers that be are ordained of God."

As regards Christian responsibility, it is of no essential importance what may be the form of government. It may be despotic or constitutional; it may be aristocratic or republican. Nay, more, in its profession, it may be Pagan or Mahometan, Popish or Protestant. The principle of rule, as regards mankind and the earth, remains untouched. Thus the Christian is bound to pay allegiance and honor wherever he may be—in England to the Queen, and in France to the Emperor; in Russia to the Czar, and in Turkey to the Sultan; and the same thing is true of all subordinate authorities. The only limit is that the Christian owes absolute subjection to God; and therefore when obeying an earthly government entails—happily a rare thing—disobedience to God, it need scarcely be said, that he must obey God rather than man. To resist the powers is to resist God's ordinance. The alternative for the Christian (when he may not obey a human command that involves a breach of God's will) is suffering, not resistance. But in general it remains true, that to him who does good the magistrate, under any government you please, is God's minister for good. So said the Apostle Paul in view of an arbitrary and idolatrous power. "But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid: FOR HE BEARETH NOT THE SWORD IN VAIN." That is to say, we have the apostle, long after Christ had been extensively preached among the Gentiles, urging the saints at Rome to submit themselves to the existing authorities, to render to Caesar the things of Caesar. Of course, if Caesar had sought to corrupt the faith or destroy the worship of God's Church; if Nero had ordered them to give up the Lord, positively like Nebuchadnezzar, or negatively like Darius, their duty had been plain—not to protest merely, and sin all the while, but to suffer for righteousness' sake: they were to render the things not of God, but of Caesar, to Caesar. But if the State demanded any service, however hard, Christianity taught them to yield it, if not positively sinful. If it insulted and persecuted them, still they were taught to pray for kings and for all in authority, "that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

But suppose, instead of doing good, and having praise of the ruler, a man does evil, what then? "Be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain." Assuredly, if the ruler is not to use the sword, he does bear it in vain. He might as well, or better, not bear it at all; for an idle threat is a proof of feebleness, and a brutum fulmen brings a ruler, of all men, into contempt. The Apostle Paul, however, anticipates no such dereliction of duty on the part of the magistrate, but warns the ill-disposed that he is God's servant, "a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." The

passage is clear as noonday. It demonstrates that the authority of the sword delegated to Noah and his sons, as representatives of government, is no more repealed or neutralized by the grace of the Christian revelation, than it had been by the righteousness of the Mosaic code. It proves that the Christian is bound to respect that sword by whatever hands it may be wielded. Even if the magistrate were an infidel, if he degraded his office by regarding the popular will (not God) as the source of his authority, the Christian is not the less bound to own God's authority in him, and to honor him as God's minister in worldly things, in “the things of Caesar.” It is mere delusion, therefore, to suppose that Christianity deprives a government of the authority to punish evildoers with the sword. Paul, as we have seen, fully recognizes that power, and describes the ruler as one authorized by God to avenge evil. To speak of mercy, amendment, &c., as the sole or chief aim when law is violated and a man is convicted (for instance) of murder, is to evince the utmost confusion of thought. For while grace is the central idea in God's scheme for saving sinners by the cross, justice is and must be the foundation of all earthly government, Jewish or Gentile. Doubtless, in the Gospel God can and does justify—not pardon only, but justify—the chief of sinners freely, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. But thence to infer that a worldly ruler ought to deal on the same principle towards criminals, is, in my opinion, to despise both revelation and reason.

Some, I am aware, find a difficulty because of Matt. 5:38, &c., and similar texts. This is due to a failure in seizing the bearing of these scriptures; for no believer would even insinuate that one part of God's word contradicts another. Now we have seen Rom. 13 to teach distinctly that the ruler is to be owned as bearing not the sword in vain; as an avenger to execute wrath on him that doeth evil; in short, as God's minister in earthly things, no less than Paul and Apollos were God's ministers in heavenly things. This chapter formally sets the Christian in the place of subjection to the powers that be, asserts the authority which God has vested in them, and filially makes it a matter not of wrath merely but of conscience to the believer. Matt. 5 is in quite another direction, but perfectly consistent with the former teaching. Here the Lord instructs His disciples in their individual path (not their relation to governors), and puts their calling to walk in grace, active or passive, in contrast with the Jews, who were responsible to act in the righteousness of the law. It is absurd to apply such a passage to a government or a worldly tribunal. If it did so apply, it would prove that magistrates ought to caress and reward every culprit, instead of punishing any.

1 Peter 2 connects and enforces both truths within a narrow compass. On the one hand, we are exhorted, verses 13, 14, to submit ourselves to “every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king. as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.” On the other hand, we are told that this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. “For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” The latter verses savor as strongly of Matt. 5 as the former do of Rom. 13; they teach different but harmonious truths. And the present day is a time when we need to put each other in mind “to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, skewing all meekness unto all men” (Titus 3:1, 2); for there is no lack of them that “walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.” The Lord keep His own in the

path of obedience!

Chapter 184

Presbyterianism: Part 1

However unfeignedly one may rejoice in the prosperity of Christians, wherever they may be placed, as we clearly ought, and as I trust I do; however much we may desire the influence of Christian truth over the youths of a country, in contrast with the infidelity and popery now so influential and popular, and this is assuredly near my heart; yet in the volcanic heavings of the present day, when Christian bodies are so much mixed up with the world, and when, even among Christian professors, man and man's advancement are so displacing Christ, it is well to learn how to separate the precious from the vile, to learn what is the path in which the patient Christian should walk, and how far what is held out to us as good is good according to God.

The paper I am now reviewing affords me an opportunity of examining principles whose activity I have seen displayed in other countries, and whose working it is of moment to inquire into, as very prevalent in the present day, and at the same time of investigating the claims of a system free from the grosser elements of ecclesiastical corruption, and hence not infrequently affording a kind of asylum and resting-place for those whose consciences make it impossible for them to remain in what is in its fundamental principles popish, if not Roman, but who at the same time have not faith to walk on the water to meet Christ, if they cannot remain in the ship. It cannot be for a moment supposed that the working or success of the system I refer to in so distant a land can be an object of jealousy, or that there I can have any motive of attack, save as that system embodies principles which have their importance everywhere, and in these days especially come home to every conscience. It is with this view that I take up this paper. It is as able a presentation of the system, in a brief compass, as I am acquainted with, and presents Presbyterianism in its fairest colors, and says as much for it as can well be said. As a general maintenance of the gospel and protestant truth against allied Popery and infidelity, the system may have its value; and I can wish it success as a providential instrument. I believe that in the colonies Presbyterianism is the body which makes some counterpoise to Romanism and its infidel power and allies. The Episcopal body, having its distinctive importance from an ecclesiastical constitution analogous to Romanism, and not from truth of doctrine, forms none; or allies itself with the Popish influence, though only for its own objects. I should therefore not write in the spirit of attack, but I shall discuss freely the pretensions and principles of the system advocated in the Moderator's speech to the General Assembly of New South Wales.

There are some general principles more important to me than the ecclesiastical ones, which are taken for granted in the speech, but which I cannot pass over, as they are the key to a large movement among Christian men now, and involve most serious questions, trying to the heart even when they are clearly resolved to spiritual understanding and conscience by scripture. To a very great extent these have no more to do with Presbyterianism than with other denominations. They involve the mixture of the Church and the world. The true character of Christianity is in question in them. I am not here to call in question any needed improvement or culture when the will of God has placed us in the path of such culture. If it be an end, it is evil, it is not Christ. If it be a means of doing God's will, it may be a dangerous path, and is so; but it has its place, and if it be to be done,

it should, as everything else, be done well; not in the case of a Christian, I repeat, as an object—Christ only can be rightly that—the one motive for everything; but, as in everything we do according to His will, and to serve Him, we should do it diligently and well, heartily as unto the Lord. Thank God, we can! All these things are apt to become objects: faith looks beyond them and uses them as means when called for. A man in laboring for his children may work beautifully; but that is a different thing from having beautiful work artistically as his object. The question here is, Are we called by a heavenly calling, as a new creation belonging to heaven, though obliged to be pilgrims for awhile on earth? Are death and resurrection the basis of Christian life, or the improvement of the old man as an object in and of this world, because we are still of it?

The discourse of the Moderator does not take up the improvement of natural talents for needed service in this pilgrimage, but connects it with the Church—makes it (as is so largely done in these days, more especially in new countries) a part of Christian life. Progress in the world, intellectual advancement, is a part, a large part, of Christian acting. The spirit of the age is to characterize Christianity if Christ even lie as a germ at the bottom.

I quote the passage as expressive of the system: —

“Young Men's Mutual Improvement Societies—now happily connected with almost every congregation in the city—have also formed a union for prosecuting their intellectual and Christian advancement, and for cherishing that esprit de corps which young men of a church like ours—so rich with historic memories and apostolic glories—should always realize. It is interesting and refreshing to mark these hopeful phases of young life in the Church; and it would be well if Fathers and Brethren gave their encouragement and aid to associations so calculated to maintain the doctrine and order of our ancestral church in this new land.”

It is impossible to imagine anything more clearly connecting the Church of God and the world, intellectual improvement and grace, the Church and ancestral descent, in one single idea and category of thought. Improvement Societies and scriptural faith and polity in one common thought as if young men's improvement and spiritual life were identical objects, and the unconverted and the converted could pursue them together; for the association and the object of the association is common to all. And the ancestral church, in the judgment of its highest authority, is to be sustained in faith and polity, not by grace and the Holy Ghost, but by the enlightenment of the young in the creed and history of the ancestral church, and by their intellectual improvement and their esprit de corps. Indeed, the intellectual improvement comes first; the rest is a fair cover to it. Is this the character of Christianity as the word of God presents it, that for which the blessed Son of God gave Himself on the cross? I will speak of the Presbyterian system in a moment. But this is a more serious thing. It uses the natural influence exercised, by an ancestral church, to cultivate the spirit of the world and the esprit de corps.

It connects the thought of the Church with the world, and not with God, and Christianity with intellectual improvement, not with Christ and the path which He trod. The principle I refer to is just this: the world, and its objects and spirit, are accepted; and it is sought to Christianize it in form and moral influences. Deliverance from it to be the servant of Christ, by the power of the Spirit of God, is not thought of. It is not the details of the system I am concerned with—they may vary; it is the system and its principle. It reduces Christianity to a worldly level to bring the world under its influence. Its fairest form is when it seeks in large terms to provide a shelter for young men,

separated, when beginning life, from their families and home influences (an object full of interest), but it works this by engaging Christians in objects and pursuits adapted to unconverted young men, and wholly foreign to Christ and the spirit of the Christian. Intellectual and Christian advancement are put together with intellect first; and wherever Christ is not all, other things will be always first. It runs to seed in a thousand shapes. Christianity is held to be gloomy, if Christians cannot dance and go to the theater, which is approved by ministers held in reputation for piety, with reserve of gross immorality; unconverted young men are taken to teach in Sunday schools; and what is really gambling and levity of the most objectionable character goes on in “churches” ancestral or others, in order to make money, to have a fine building and an eloquent and intellectual minister, who will bring a crowd. Hired professional singers entertain the congregation; and if the choir be composed of young people, it is the occasion of levity, into the details of which there is no need I should enter here. No one acquainted with churches in the Colonies (some, at any rate; I do not profess to know Australia) and the United States, but knows perfectly well the state of things I refer to, and the practical effect of intellectual improvement in the young, and the mixture of Christianity and the world connected with it. I dare say the degree of evil may differ, and there are, of course, exceptions; but that of which I speak is sufficiently universal to be characteristic of the state of things. Every one knows that theater—going and dancing is the common practice of professing Christians in the States; and if they would tell it, they know a great deal more. Is this the just effect of the death of Christ and the power of the Spirit of God?

But my business is with the principle. Mutual Improvement Societies, for intellectual and Christian advancement, are calculated to maintain the doctrine and order of the “ancestral church.” is that the Church of God? Is the Church of God an ancestral one? Judaism was an ancestral religion; they were beloved for the fathers' sake, as they are still. But can a trace be found in the New Testament, in connection with the Church, of an esprit de corps connected with an ancestral church, a church “rich with historic memories?” I understand it in a worldly or patriotic system; but the Church of God is the body of Christ—baptized into one body by one Spirit. With the thought given of the Church of God in scripture, no one thought given here can coalesce. If it be said, We do not pretend it is the Church of God; then it is something substituted for it, which is to engage the affections and activities of all under its influence, forming an esprit de corps to the exclusion of that which is the true Church of God. It is “our church,” “our ancestral church,” which is to absorb the energies and affections of the heart, not the Church of God: and I must add, of the natural heart, not the affections of the new man by the Spirit, because it is the body of Christ, composed of the members of His body so dear to Him. It is an esprit de corps, not the Spirit of God which is to govern; human and historic attachments, not divine affections and Christ Himself.

Will this sanctify as Christian motives do? or will it give a Christian color and name to what, after all, are but carnal feelings, the rudiments of this world (only that the heart is deceived by covering them with the name of the Church), not after Christ? It may enlist clever and improved young men in the Presbyterian system, plunge Christian young men into a low kind of Christianity, and fix their hearts on objects other than Christ, under the name of intellectual improvement, sanctioning worldliness and what they can pursue in common with the world; but it will never attach the soul to Christ, never make Him all, as He is in all them that are His, will never build up God's Church, nor the individual, into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Christ died, that they which live should live not to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again. He has called us

to take up our cross and follow Him. If we would serve Him, we are to follow Him. He has purchased to Himself a peculiar people. We are not to be conformed to the world, but transformed by the renewing of our mind. If we live in the Spirit, we are to walk in the Spirit—to set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth. We belong to a new creation; not to the fashion of this world which passes away. We are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; and the friendship of the world is enmity against God. We are to seek the victory which overcomes the world by faith. We are not our own, but bought with a price; our business is to manifest the life of Jesus in our mortal bodies, to walk as He walked. All that is in the world is not of the Father, but of the world.

Now, I ask, If that be the character of Christianity given us by the word of God (with the infinite motive of Christ's self-sacrifice for us, and the blessed object of being conformed to His image, and growing up to Him who is the head in all things, and manifesting Him, so that the Church should be the effectual epistle of Christ), is there one trace of Christ in what is encouraged in the exhortations of the Moderator of the General Assembly of New South Wales? Is that not casting Christ and His cross into the shade, to clothe with the name of Christian the spirit of the world and an esprit de corps? Is it not the sanction of worldliness to more attachment, not to Christ and His path, but to a body which the Moderator favors? It is, I know, what is current at the present day, and especially in new countries; but is it the world or the cross and Spirit of Christ, as manifested in the New Testament, and founded on the unutterable worth of the self-sacrifice of the Son of God? I repeat here, The question is, not if a Christian young man is to seek the cultivation and improvement necessary to the effectual pursuit of his providential calling, but whether Christianity and the Church, which Christ has redeemed by His precious blood, and the ministry of the Spirit, is to have for its object, not the deliverance from this present evil world (to effect which Christ gave Himself for our sins), but the urging Christian and worldly young men into pursuits which are of the world, and which worldly young men can pursue as well as Christians, and which Christians can only pursue upon motives which can govern the world as well as them? I confess, I can conceive of nothing more sad than this use of Christianity to color worldly pursuits in the unconverted, and to engage Christians in objects which continually enfeeble and adulterate their Christianity.

I turn to what is to me a comparatively immaterial object—the Presbyterian system. One system is, I believe, little better than another, and the Presbyterian is dislocated and broken to pieces like the rest. Reunion has been attempted in the Colonies, with, at any rate, partial success; and the same is attempted between the Old and New Schools in the States (that is, between the Colonistic and American branches of the Presbyterian body). But the general history of Presbyterianism has been failure, at least as much as that of other Protestant bodies. On the continent of Europe, it is the most infidel of all existing churches so called. Every one knows that it had become almost universally Socinian in England so as to be excluded by law from Lady Howley's charity. The split of Kirk and Free Church is known to all. There are at least three large Presbyterian bodies in Scotland, and the Free Kirk threatened by a disruption within itself by an attempt to unite it with one of them. All this is sad to every godly spirit, and only a part of that sorrowful disintegration which in these last days is going on in Protestantism, to the destruction even of its public testimony.

But Presbyterianism is a snare to some in the present day in this way. It is respectable as an original reformed and national body, has an historic prestige as our Moderator tells us, has had its

martyrs, and it is not characterized by the gross superstitions and remains of Romanism which is now both corrupting and disrupting the English body. Hence it becomes for some a refuge from that sickly corporation, when there is not faith to follow Christ wholly. It becomes thus a part, though a somewhat wearisome part, of one's service in the present day to examine its pretensions, for which the New South Wales Moderator furnishes the occasion.

We can understand a person attached to a body by education (a thousand ties of imagination recalling those who have suffered in founding it, shed the luster of their faith and sorrows over what we call our church, born within its precincts, christened there, married perhaps there, parents and ancestors buried there, to whom we are attached: ties as strong as those of country or of school and college, with a halo around it of what is distant and divine). We may be very ordinary professors, but our Abrahams, and Moseses, and Davids, saints owned of God, belonged to the body to which we belong. Their good report encircles the brow of the community we personify in our imagination. Still, when we seek for the Church of God, when with the earnestness which the Spirit of God gives, with the conscience awakened, and the heart under the influence of the claims of the sacrifice of the Son of God, we seek from the word of God the Church which Christ loved, and for which He gave Himself, when we seek it in its manifestation here below where duty is, when what we owe to the cross has possession of the soul, it becomes impossible to speak or think of an ancestral church.

We want God's Church, if He has one, that in which man has to behave himself fitly, and which is the pillar and ground of the truth, the Church of the living God. It is in vain to say that this is the Church as it will be finally in glory, or the invisible Church. It was a Church where Timothy was to know how to behave himself, and where directions for elders and deacons, and admission of widows had to be given. This was not the glorified Church in heaven. If it be alleged that all this is ruined and gone, let it be acknowledged with humiliation of heart, that what God had planted so lovely has been ruined and has withered under the hand of man. Let us take the place of confession, which becomes such an acknowledgment, and not substitute some other body for it. An imitation church will not do. What is imitation of power? Clothing an unconverted man, and an improvement society, with the prestige of martyrs who suffered some centuries ago, is a very different thing from honoring unfeignedly in grace, as a Christian, those who have suffered because they belong to Christ. The whole state of feeling is different: one is grace, owning rich divine grace in others; the other is an unconverted man accrediting himself with what he has no real part in to the deceiving of his own soul.

But to pursue the main point. It is quite certain that an ancestral church has no place in scripture whatever. There is the Church the body of Christ manifested on earth (as we see in 1 Cor. 12) with its various members and gifts; and there is the house of God in which the holy Ghost dwells, and which, at any rate in its normal state, is the pillar and ground of the truth. There were local churches in the different cities, locally holding (without however any separation from the whole body of believers) the position of the Church of God there. But an ancestral church is a thing wholly unknown to scripture and destructive of every idea there given of the Church of God. It may be the Church of Scotland or of New South Wales; but it is not the Church of the living God, but something set up instead of it, and which displaces it—displaces it in the heart and affections of the saint—and is thus the contrary to sanctifying (for we are sanctified by the truth), and is an object to which the affections or really rather the passions of the unconverted can be attached, to

the misleading of their souls. With such a thought the word of God has lost its authority, and the Holy Ghost its power in the heart. There cannot be a more delusive word than the word “Church,” nor a greater instance of it than the statements of the Moderator. He tells us that the word has only one meaning everywhere. Be it so. But he does not tell us what it means. It means an assembly. When the town clerk of Ephesus dismissed the assembly in Acts 19:41—, it is just the same word. Does that mean a church? The word means neither more nor less than an assembly. It is a mere delusion to say “church” means always the same thing. It does not in English, for a building is so called thus as to deceive many, and in the original it has nothing in itself to do with what we call church. Thus its use in Acts 7, applied to Israel, has nothing whatever to do with its habitual use in the New Testament; or rather it is exactly the opposite (save as the mere fact of its being an assembly which was true of that dismissed by the town clerk at Ephesus). The assembly in the wilderness was the nation of Israel—no Gentile had a title to approach as such. It was exclusively such. The middle wall of partition was standing; they were bound to keep it up. The essence of the Church of God is that that wall has been broken down and there is neither Jew nor Gentile. To say that it always means the same thing, and to quote Acts 7 in saying so, is not only to rest on the surface but to delude oneself if not others.

Take the word: it includes an assembly such as Ephesus. Take the thing; and the assembly in the wilderness, and God's assembly formed consequent on Christ's death, are founded on principles diametrically opposed and destructive one of another. And the definition (“A church comprehended a society of the people of God") is as vague and incorrect as may be. A church is an assembly: what is the meaning of “comprehending a society?” An assembly means an assembly; if not actually assembled, it may be used in a general way for those who habitually assemble, but then it is the society. When we speak of the Church in its Christian sense (and that only is what we are occupied with), it is God's assembly founded on the death of Christ, and assembled by the power of the Holy Ghost, and dwelt in by Him. Christ gave Himself not for that nation only, but to gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. This is the general idea, for it is only stated here in general.

Now the grand result will be that they will be made perfect in one in glory. That bright and blessed hope is beyond the sphere of our responsibilities, if it helps, as it blessedly does, in them. Christ will present it to Himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle. This I trust Dr. Steel looks to, as I, as all saints, in whatever degree of earnestness and intelligence. It is the most blessed view of the Church; but though there might be difference on some points, as to whom “it comprehended,” I pass that question by here.

Besides this, which Christ—Christ alone—is building of living stones, and which is yet incomplete, we have the assembly on earth, and that viewed in a double character, as the body and as the house. Eph. 1 and 1 Cor. 12 view it as the body; Eph. 2, 1 Cor. 3 and 1 Tim. 3 view it as the house. Then, again, in each locality the Christians of the place were called the assembly at that place, as they were in fact. The assembly in any given house (“the church in thine house") calls really for no special notice. Anyone can understand that Christians in those days meeting in some large upper-room were the assembly in that house, if they habitually met there. There is no ecclesiastical idea, so to speak, in it. They broke bread at Jerusalem, κατ’ο■κον, at home in their houses; but there was an assembly,” the whole assembly,” all the saints in Jerusalem, as Acts 5:11; 8:1; in Antioch, xiv. 27; again, Jerusalem, xv. 4-22; and so of a multitude of other places in

the Acts; and the Epistles and Rev. 2; 3 show the same thing. When a country is spoken of, we find the assemblies of Galatia. It was a very simple fact: there were a number of assemblies in the country. An assembly is not simply all the Christians in the world, but all Christians viewed as assembled into one—and indeed into one body, so that if one member suffer, all suffer with it. There is unity in the pervading power of the Holy Ghost.

For a denominational body there is no room in the scriptural account of the Church or assembly, unless it be “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas,” I of Luther, I of John Knox or Calvin. Churches are historic or ancestral (that is, not of God or scriptural). There is a great body which reaches beyond this—that of Rome, the abiding witness of the corruption and ruin of the Church or house of God placed in responsibility on earth, keeping its name and form, but in the hands of Satan and the seat of his power. The Church of England so called is not so distinctively historic. It seemed about to be so in the reign of Edward VI., but in Elizabeth's she, partly from political motives, partly from education and character, sufficiently patched it back again into Romanism to break it up now into violent parties, one clinging to the whore of Babylon, the other to what truth has survived in it, and to a large mass, by its practical incapacity to govern itself or anyone else, opening the door to latitudinarian infidelity, torturing people's hearts by vacillation between ecclesiastical millinery and adoration of the Eucharist on one side, and Colenso on the other. Thank God, there is the immutable faithfulness of Christ to trust to. He will surely have the Church to present to Himself, and we can count upon His unfailing grace now by the way. An ancestral church, with mutual improvement societies maintaining its doctrine and polity by an esprit de corps, is not the Church of God formed and maintained by the Holy Ghost and founded on the work of Christ: for him who looks for the Church of God and bows to the word it is self-condemned.

(To be continued)

Chapter 185

Presbyterianism: Part 2

But the Moderator enters into detail. The office-bearers, he tells us, of the church were elected by the people. There is some difficulty in uniting many statements connected with scriptural questions, because traditional habits have set aside every trace of scriptural ideas or ways. For instance: are preachers (ministers, so called, now) teachers, or office-bearers? They are generally thought so, but these were assuredly not chosen by the people. The Holy Ghost distributed to every man severally as He would. They were not chosen by the people. Prophets were not chosen by the people. There were certain prophets in the church at Antioch. Again we read, “As every man has received the gift, let him so minister the same, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” When the Lord ascended up on high, He gave gifts to men—pastors, and teachers, and evangelists. Then these were not chosen by the people. If they had five talents or two talents, their business was to trade with them: they were evil and slothful servants if they did not. This was regulated in the assembly by rules which provided for order. In the unity of the body, having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, we are to minister according to it and wait on it. (Rom. 12) If Apollos taught at Ephesus, he taught also at Corinth; he was that member in the body. If an evangelist went forth, even a woman was to test him by doctrine. Diotrephes indeed did not like this vagabond ministry; but Gaius did, and did it faithfully in John's judgment. They that were scattered abroad in the persecution after Stephen's death went everywhere preaching the word, and we read (Acts 11) the hand of the Lord was with them. So deacons who served well purchased a good degree and great boldness in Jesus Christ, as we see in the case of Stephen and of Philip.

In the matter of the ministry of the word the desire of the people is negatived by the whole testimony of the New Testament, both in the assembly and to the world. Women were to keep silence; not more than two or three were to speak, and not together but by course; but it was by the distribution of the Holy Ghost they had them all, and not by the desire of the people. If it be said that these were extraordinary gifts—which is not true of Eph. 4, leaving aside apostles and prophets who were the foundation—but if they were, do not let us talk of scripture and primitive apostolic practice; because then the whole fabric of scriptural and primitive practice is gone. And a clergy chosen by the people has been substituted for it without any gifts of the Holy Ghost at all. If not then, as far as the ministry of the word goes, choice by the people is not the scriptural mode, but gift and choice by Christ and the Holy Ghost.

This is a very serious question, because the whole action of the Holy Ghost in ministry is dependent on it. God may act in spite of man's false principles, but it is a serious thing to have such as are a denial of God's way of acting. At any rate the ministry of the word is not by the choice and election of the people, if the expression office-bearers is to include them. If it does not then the Moderator is leaving out all that is most important in real service and in our similarity to apostolic practice.

But the omissions go farther. He does not venture to speak of elders. This is curious in speaking of office bearers, but then he flies at higher game. The apostles were chosen by the people! This is a curious statement. There were twelve apostles. Eleven, we all know, were chosen by the Lord: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” With these, at any rate, the people had nothing to do. So that for a warrant for primitive practice, the Moderator is on rather a narrow basis here. Further, after the Holy Ghost came, such a course never was pursued at all. This, I dare say, may be of little weight with Moderators; but those who know that the Paraclete was to guide and lead the Church when come, so that we are to act under what He has given, will feel this of some importance; the rather as we have an apostle called afterward who tells us he was neither of men nor by man. So that the election of an apostle is confined to an act which took place between the Lord's presence, and the Holy Ghost's presence, when neither were there and never happened before or after: never when the Lord was there, never when the Holy Ghost was there; on the contrary, it is negatived in both cases by the history. None was chosen to replace James; and Paul, we all know, was directly called of God and utterly rejected such a principle. And I must add it is not true even as to Matthias. They drew lots, after praying the Lord to show whether of the twain He had chosen, and the lot fell on Matthias. To make this warrant for universal choice by the Church after the Holy Ghost has been given, after another way of having apostles has been manifested, and no idea of replacing an apostle hinted at, when one was subsequently put to death, is a proof that people have very little (I would humbly say, nothing) to say for the people's choosing office-bearers. They are not going to choose apostles now I suppose. Why not, if this be the warrant for following primitive practice?

But there is another striking evidence from scripture on this point. Paul knows no apostles till after Christ was exalted and by His only gift. I do not mean that he denied Christ's choice of the twelve of course, but he knows no such apostles in the Church. Christ ascended up on high and gave some apostles. There is the divine account of the origin of apostles in the Church of Christ. Christ gave some apostles. Who was to choose them? So “God has set in the Church, first, apostles,” &c. This was the Spirit distributing to every man severally as He wills. I confine myself to actual proofs; but any one accustomed to the difference of Jewish and Christian order, and the change made by the coming of the Holy Ghost on the exaltation of Christ, would at once do justice to an argument drawn from the drawing lots for an apostle. Indeed it does seem strange to read or hear of such arguments in the Christian church. But I suppose we must be surprised at nothing.

The Moderator jumps from this very high ground clean over elders, of which I will speak just now, and lights on the case of deacons, whose election by the people I do not contest, though in terms it is not stated; but the seven were practically such, and the principle of their choice only confirms the evidence of the falseness of the general statement. The apostles would not leave the word of the Lord to serve tables. The people literally ministered of their means to the common wants. The apostles would not have their ministry hindered or interrupted by questions of money and servile, however gracious, care; and they make the multitude choose those who are to minister what the multitude had given. But when the gift was a spiritual gift from Christ, Christ had chosen the person to minister, and they had nothing to choose: the choice was made, the responsibility there. Perfect freedom for the workman to get another to go with him, to go alone if called, or to refuse to go on another's work. We find all these cases in scripture. Silas abode at Antioch, Paul gets others to go with him. Apollos, graciously, I believe, would not go to Corinth when Paul graciously wished

him. The people chose office-bearers for money matters and tables, but for nothing else. The case arose with Paul also. Money was to go from the assemblies for the poor at Jerusalem. Paul requires them to choose persons to accompany him, providing things honest in the sight of men. (2 Cor. 8)

Dr. Steel tells us bishops and elders are the same. Quite true. Scripture shows it as plainly as possibly can be. And they were the important office-bearers of the Church. But is it not singular that no attempt is made to show that they were chosen by the people? We have seen that the ministers of the word were not. Scripture contradicts it in every page. It flowed from gifts, extraordinary or ordinary so-called, which were the effect of Christ's choice, and imposed an obligation, the responsibility being regulated by scripture. The elders or bishops took care of (as their names imply, were overseers of) the flock of God; some being ministers of the word, others not; but choice by the people of these true office-bearers, the Moderator does not attempt to prove, not even definitely to assert. It was wise. Scripture states the contrary. The apostles chose elders for them in necessity. (Acts 14:23.) We learn by this passage that elders were local office-bearers. Gifts were in the body at large, as 1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4, Rom. 12, and other passages show. So also he left Titus in Crete to establish elders in every city—needless surely if the people were to choose them. There is no trace of the election of elders by the people; there is proof of the contrary.

The next point is—Ordination to the office of the ministry was an act of the presbytery. Let us examine this.

To quote Acts 6 is really too bad. “This was preferred,” it is said, “by the apostles themselves when they were all together at Jerusalem.” I honestly do not understand what this means. Of presbytery, there is not one word; of the ministry, if it means ministry of the word, not a hint: the apostles would not give up the ministry of the word and so set others to serve tables, and they, the apostles, not the presbytery or elders (they are distinguished, Acts 15), laid their hands upon them. One must be dreadfully hard up to quote this as an ordination to the ministry by the presbytery, seeing neither is mentioned.

The next case is Paul at Antioch. (Acts 13) Here prophets are together, and the Holy Ghost says, “Separate me Barnabas and Paul to the work to which I have called them” —no popular choice of office—bearers, at any rate; and these prophets, not the presbytery, of which there is not a word, laid their hands on them, not to ordain, them, but to commend them to the grace of God for the work which they thereupon fulfilled. (Acts 14:26.) Paul had had hands laid on him before and received the Holy Ghost. (Acts 9:17.) But this was no presbytery either. At Antioch, which happened afterward, Paul and Barnabas are sent forth (not ordained) by the Holy Ghost, recommended by the praying prophets to the grace of God. If this be ordination, it is ordination of apostles by laymen.

The only case approaching to such an ordination, though far enough from it, is 1 Tim. 4:14. But the element first noticed is wholly overlooked by these ecclesiastical systems. The gift was in Timothy by prophecy; he was to stir it up. The elder hood accompanied this with their moral recognition; but the ministry, we are certain, was no way conferred on him by it. It was by prophecy with (or accompanied by) the laying on of their hands. But, further, we know that he had received the gift by the laying on of the apostle's hands. (2 Tim. 1:6.) If there was any ordination, it was episcopal;

the presbytery were only μετ■ (an accompanying circumstance); the gift of ministry was conferred by the apostle. The pretension to imitate this now, as Episcopalians do, by and for unconverted men, is too serious a thing to enter on now by the by. As far as any evidence of laying hands on office-bearers goes, it is of the same character. It is to Timothy it is said, “Lay hands suddenly on no man;” while in Paul's address to the elders at Miletus, there is no hint of ordaining elders for the continuation of the polity of the Church.

As to ordination to ministry, it is a mere fable. There is no such thought in scripture. They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. He who had received a talent was bound to trade with it. As every man had received the gift, they were to minister the same as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. The Holy Ghost distributed to every man severally as He would, and only two or three were to speak, so that they might all prophesy one by one, and all might learn, and all be comforted. They were not indeed to be many masters (teachers); but such a direction could have no place with a fixed ministry of one chosen by the people. Women were to keep silence—were not suffered to teach: a prohibition useless, again, if there were simply fixed teachers. I have referred to the two short epistles of John which confirm in the strongest way the same truth.

Ordination to ministry, meaning thereby the ministry of the word, is an utterly unscriptural thing. Hands were laid on deacons, or, what was equivalent to them, the servers of tables. The laying on of hands was the universal sign of commending to God or conferring blessing: the sick were cured by it; the Holy Ghost was given by it; men were commended to the grace of God by it. And, though it is never so said, I do not therefore doubt that hands were laid on elders, and that 1 Tim. 5:22 includes them, though not referring to such exclusively. The conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost is (save a special case of the direct interference of the Lord) confined to the apostles; the choosing and establishing elders is the part of the apostles or their delegate as Titus, and of no one else in scripture.

I add, the churches are wanting now, over which they could be named, nor could any pretension to such a place officially be justified, unless it could be said “over which the Holy Ghost hath appointed you overseers.” Membership of a church, it cannot be too pressingly insisted on, is a thing unknown to scripture. All who have the Spirit are members of Christ.

Setting apart men to sacred office (that is, an official clergy, depositaries by ordination of the title to minister the word) is unknown to scripture and contradicted by it.

The next case is an appeal from the decision of a congregation to an assembly of apostles and elders as the office-bearers of the church. This is as unfounded as all the rest. In personal matters such an appeal, instead of being “allowed to members of the church,” is positively denied to members of the scriptural congregation. If the congregation or assembly were not heard, he was to be as a heathen man and a publican—appeal, that is, precluded. But Acts 15 is referred to. Here was a question, not of members of a congregation, but one affecting the whole standing and unity of the Church of God: was it to be circumcised or not, brought down to Judaism or be the Church of God, in which is neither Jew nor Greek? In fact the question was whether there was to be a Church of God at all. Paul and Barnabas discussed with these false teachers: the church came to no decision at all. God permitted the Apostle Paul not to succeed then in putting it down, I do not doubt, in order that the Jewish part of the church might decide the question, that unity might be

fully preserved, and, what I may call, the Jewish apostolate settle the question. At any rate, there was no decision and no appeal. Paul was unable to put down the false teachers. The local assembly decided nothing. The apostles and elders came together to consider the matter. It was no gathering of delegates or official assembly. The apostles and elders came together to consider it, and with them, it appears, all the brethren; at any rate, they take part in the letter and sending of Judas and Silas. But it was the local church of Jerusalem and nothing else. Could a local church or even what is called a church court say, It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, and band the whole Church of God with apostolic authority, by the decrees (the δ■γματα) which they issue? Does the Moderator think that the assembly which he presided over could bind the whole Church of God by its decrees with apostolic authority, and say, on a question affecting the whole Church of God, It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us? If they say, No, we only pretend to govern our own church, then their church is not the Church of God, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterians bears not the smallest analogy to the meeting of the apostles to deliberate on what footing the common Christianity of the saints was to be founded. Indeed the Moderator gets on dangerous ground here, and ground which would effectually guard every sober mind against Presbyterian ideas of their courts and judicatories.

“Apostolic dicta [we are told] pronounced by inspired lips, did not settle the controversies of the early Church.” But apostolic dicta by inspired lips are the word of God.

“If any one be spiritual,” says the apostle, “let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” It is rather strong language to say that apostolic dicta from inspired lips could not finally settle a controversy, but that a church-representative judicatory, a General Assembly of Scotland or New South Wales could. If this be not so, the whole statement is idle talk.

But whom did the apostle represent? For we read in the Moderator's discourse, the government of the church was representative. Is that the true character of apostolic authority in virtue of which they made decrees binding on the Church? They represented the Lord who had given them authority. They exercised it from the beginning. They started with it as given by the Lord, and what they bound was bound in heaven. Was that because they represented the Church as derived from the Lord? They had it when there was no such assembly to represent. To say it was an assembly of bishops or elders is quite false, unless apostolic authority goes for nothing. Supreme power is in Christ and in Christ only. He is Son over the house. He conferred it on the apostles. He has promised indeed to be with His people in every way in which they serve Him; but John would make listening to apostles a test of truth. “He that is of God heareth us. He that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” Yea, where the two or three are gathered together, there He is, and from the authority there exercised in its place there is no appeal. (Matt. 18) The language of the Moderator is very dangerous and unscriptural.

Further, it is a mere Scottish prejudice to call Christ “King of the Church.” The leaders of that system may have meant very well; but it is wholly unscriptural. Scripture never speaks of Him as King of the Church. The Church has a much higher place. It is His body and His bride. Nay, when He takes His great power and reigns, we shall reign with Him. He is on His Father's throne now; when He sits on His own, those who overcome will sit there with Him. It is a wholly false and unscriptural dogma, derogatory to the glory and truth of the Church, and to the value of Christ's

death and love, to make Christ King of the Church.

A gradation of judicatories is a miserable fable contradicted formally by Matt. 18 and attempted to be confirmed by the utmost (and that a very dangerous) perversion of Acts 15

As to all elders not having gift to minister in word and doctrine, it is true. Still as a rule they were if possible to be apt to teach.

Thus far I have discussed the Moderator's statements, the common ground of Presbyterianism; but there are important points left out. The Presbyterian body, as did all the Reformers, profess sacramental regeneration. I have often heard this pooh-poohed, for self-esteem is not lacking to Presbyterianism; but there is not a doubt of it. The difference between their doctrine and the Anglican and Lutheran on the subject is, that both the latter hold that the efficacy of baptism takes effect in all the baptized, but that then the participator may be lost after all—a strange result when both profess to believe in electing grace. But that is not our subject now. The Presbyterian holds that the effectual saving grace of baptism applies only to the elect. The consequences of patching this Romanist heretical error on certain essential truths are various. The effect with Presbyterians is, that they hold that the effect of baptismal grace may be produced at forty years' distance of time from the celebration of the rite.

There is no telling what theological teaching may bring the mind into making God out of a piece of flour and eternal life out of a bowl of water! Charge me not with irreverence. The irreverence is in those who invent such superstitions. The expression of “making God” is the commonest and usual expression for transubstantiation; and conferring eternal life by a little water is discussed in Luther's Catechism and taught in the English one, of course in the Roman, and, as I shall now show, in the Presbyterian. “A sacrament is a holy ordinance, instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers.” Thus the benefits of the new covenant are applied by the sacrament. In the Confession of Faith it is limited to the elect, and that in a very definite way. “Yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated. The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet by the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's will, in His appointed time.” Nothing can be plainer than that. By the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is conferred by the Holy Ghost when God sees fit “in His appointed time.” Nothing can be more definite, precise, and positive.

I pass over, in the Moderator's discourse, the self-applause as to catholicity; but I turn for a moment to the declaration of its being effectual to secure unity of doctrine. The Moderator confines it, it is true, to Anglo-Saxon Presbyterians; for, religion goes by nations now, not by grace. It is wise to do so; because German, Swiss, and French Presbyterianism have fallen into gross infidelity, as every one knows, whatever partial reaction may have set in in a very few places. But even among Anglo-Saxons it really is a fiction. In England the mass of them have been Socinian, as I have already noticed, and a large body of them, as every one knows in Ireland, Arians. Not only so: the Australian Moderator boasts of 6000 clergymen in the States who (of course making allowance for individual exceptions) have unity of doctrine and form one body. Did the Moderator

ever hear of Old school and New school Presbyterians, two entirely distinct bodies, one holding to the doctrine of the Westminster Confession as to high Calvinist doctrine, the other Arminian? Civilities have passed between them lately in hopes of a reunion, but there at present it remains. Other divisions, in the old world, not in doctrine, are notorious. I cannot say whether Old school or New school be the most numerous body at this moment. One thing is certain, that Anglo-Saxon Presbyterians have not unity of doctrine and are separate bodies because of diversity in it.

Does the Moderator soberly believe that intelligent unity of doctrine obtains in all Anglo-Saxon Presbyterian churches on this statement: “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death?” I delight in the sovereignty of God; but surely I could find a good many Anglo-Saxon Presbyterians and ministers too who do not believe in reprobation. I doubt that all hold the imputation of Adam's guilt. I find very many doctrines in the Confession that no Anglo-Saxon could intelligently hold; but it would involve a controversy on doctrine beyond the limits of this paper and be a kind of attack on the Confession which is not my object.

But I will notice one point which I do not see how any intelligent Christian could accept: “The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.” Again. “God gave to Adam a law, a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it. This law after his fall continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and as such was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments and written on two tables.” All this is a fable and a mischievous fable. And I notice it because it is the foundation of the whole religious system to which it belongs.

The Trinity, the divinity and humanity of Christ, the atonement, fundamental facts or doctrines of the gospel, are believed in by Romanists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, by all who have any right to the name of Christian. 'It is when you come to apply these truths to man's relation with God, to sin, the convincing man of it, the means of removing it, the application of the remedy, and the relation of man to God, whether under law or gospel, that divergence in doctrine commences. The Romanist makes sacraments the means of life, and, together with good works, of forgiveness and justification. The latter point Protestantism, unless often the Wesleyans and formalists, has escaped from. Anglicans teach sacramental forgiveness and regeneration, and in the Puseyite phase are as near popery as dishonest people dare. Presbyterians hold, as we have seen, salvation and regeneration by sacraments. It is the opposition to the truth in these things which is now making up the public testimony of Protestants: some turning back to the anti-Christian principles of Romanism; some running loose into infidelity. Disgusted with the corruptions of Popery, finding no rest in the narrow and powerless systems of Protestantism, and having no faith in the word of God, such are cast upon the hopeless and desolating folly of their own minds. This quarrel I have not with the Presbyterians, and I thank God for it. I thank God for every public stay He may allow to subsist against the current of Popery and infidelity. But they have formed such a system of theoretic doctrine without the word, and a system which keeps souls in the greatest bondage, and so falsifies our true relationship with God, that it is impossible for one who really bows to the word, and stands fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free, to accept its teachings. It may answer in some respects to new countries for another reason. There is some

order, yet it is democratic, although in the United States Methodists and Baptists are far ahead of them in numbers. In old countries it is in as great disruption as Anglicanism, or fallen into universal infidelity; but with all this I have nothing to do. My business is with souls and with the word of God. And I take this point, of the giving of the law to Adam, as at the root of their system. It is a very mischievous fable.

Where is a trace of promise of life to Adam and his posterity if they exactly kept the law? It is a pure invention, falsifying Adam's real position and relationship with God, in order to propitiate the law of the ten commandments. There is not a tittle of scripture for it. Adam, having life, was tested by a positive well-known commandment of not eating the forbidden fruit; and the perfectness of this consisted in the point that there was no intrinsic moral question in it. It was a test of simple obedience to a sinless being, with a threat of death (for life he had). A promise of life to Adam on keeping a moral law, which supposed the knowledge of good and evil, is a mischievous fable, and denies the whole position of Adam, who was innocent. There would have been no harm in eating that fruit more than another, unless it had been forbidden. And, as I have said, this test of obedience was the only true one for an innocent being, not, as is alleged, a righteous and holy one (both which terms suppose the knowledge of good and evil, delighting in one and abhorring the other). Adam acquired the knowledge of good and evil by his disobedience: “The man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil.” But this by the by. What I insist on is, there was no promise of life, which supposed he had it not; but a threat of death, which supposed him to be alive, but alive innocent, with no knowledge of good and evil.

And when you come to details, just see, I must say, the nonsense of this system which Presbyterians accept by tradition. This law, we are told, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai “in ten commandments and written on two tables.” Think of bidding Adam to honor his father and his mother, and that his days might be long in the land Jehovah his God gave him! Think of his being forbidden to steal—nay, what is more material, not to lust or covet! Cannot these doctors see that the law supposes sin to be there in the prohibition of it, and that, unless in the case of knowing parents, which could not possibly apply to Adam, all the commandments without exception are prohibitions of sin; or refer, as the fourth, to the labor which came in as the present punishment of sin? All this is not a mere mistake of interpretation, or an imperfect way of putting things (of which I should have much to say on the Confession of Faith, and to which we are all liable); but it is grave and fundamental error on man's original relationship with God, and on the true state of our actual relationships too. The basis of the entire system of moral relationship with God in Presbyterianism is false; and it has tainted the whole evangelical system everywhere. I believe it had its origin in the Reformation, or rather in reformed popery; but it has on this point been formalized in Presbyterianism as it has been nowhere else; and I defy anyone to give the smallest atom of scripture, or (if he knows what sin and innocence mean) of common sense either. It is a theological system without a scriptural basis, and absurd upon the face of it (assuming Adam's innocence, that is, believing the scriptural statement).

This is strong language to me as to the famous Confession of Faith; but the times are serious. We want the truth. We want the solid basis of scripture, of the word of God, for what we hold. Nothing else will stand in these days. Men may deny that word; but then we know what we have to do with. Men may set up conventional systems; but then Popery is the strongest and will prevail, or infidel

disgust throw up all, and (as I believe) devour at the end Popery itself. But my business now is with the truth. Thank God, many Presbyterians love the Lord, and their traditional errors are partially dissolved in the power of grace, though, I believe, their system affects and injures their Christianity. Still every saint will cordially recognize every one in whom grace is. At any rate, that is what pleases God and is the true bond of comfort to the saint; but our question now is with a system of doctrine injurious to the saints we do love. In many parts I do not believe the Confession of Faith is really held by those who maintain it as in the doctrine of absolute reprobation.

Indeed it notoriously is not. They may talk about mysterious and deep truths when we bow. I have no objection to bowing to God on such points—it becomes us. But they do not believe what is stated in the Confession of Faith—I mean a vast number do not. And I affirm that what they do believe, the promise of life to Adam by keeping the ten commandments, is an absurd and unscriptural folly, and one which subverts his and our relations to God, fatally modifying the truth of the gospel when it is preached.

I have done. My object has not been to attack the Confession of Faith, nor the Moderator, but to discuss some great principles which interest every Christian individually and the whole Church of God as such.

My appeal is to the word of God, aided, as we all must be to use it to profit, by the grace and Spirit of God. And I cannot but think that the traditional teaching of the Presbyterians as to doctrine and polity will be found utterly wanting when compared with the word. If any Presbyterian should read this paper, I ask a patient comparison with the word of God. They are used to come to the scriptures full of the Confession of Faith and the longer and shorter catechisms. It is generally the first glory of their system that they are religiously brought up and carefully instructed in doctrine. But there is the danger accompanying this valuable care that they bring a complete system, already formed in the mind, to the study of the word of God. This is a great man— “Ille bone legit,” says Hilary as to scripture, “qui non affert sed refert sensum.”

I might have made a host of objections, but it was not my object. But no one can complain if great and vital principles, such as the question on what ground Adam stood before God, and the like, are examined in the light of scripture.

J. N. D.

(Concluded from page 96)

Chapter 186

The Presence of the Spirit

(John 16:7.)

I mean to speak a little of the general truth of the presence of the Holy Ghost, and in truth there cannot be a more general statement than that which the Lord Himself furnishes in these words. But the two great parts of the testimony and work of the Holy Ghost are also brought before us here: and, first, the presence of the Comforter. Never was there a time till Christ went to heaven when this was true; and this is why there is such amazing importance attached to Christ's going away, because even His very absence was essential to the bringing out of the full and proper character of Christianity. The going away of Jesus was, therefore, a circumstance of the deepest moment. We know that the presence of Jesus on the earth is the essential feature of the day of the Lord, and so we have these two broad facts in direct contrast: Jesus in heaven away from this scene, and Jesus coming again. The one is for the heavens; the other for the earth, when that bright day comes, when Christ, the bringer-in of glory, is making glory good and maintaining it. Now we have only the hope of glory.

Glory, as far as the earth is concerned, is not come. But this gives occasion for the display of the deepest thoughts and ways of God. There are two things brought out. First, rest in Christ through the knowledge of the work of Christ, whereby sin is put away and we are brought nigh to God. But in order to the soul being blessed yet more, they needed not only to have perfect rest for the soul, but that He should carry them out of the present scene, by His fixing their affections on a person who is out of the scene altogether. These two things combined in the Christian are found nowhere out of the Church of God. There was no rest before the death of Christ, no ease for the soul. Israel, though heirs, were under tutelage, shut up in prison, filled with the fear of death and alarm of soul, as the Psalms show us. There was no such thing as established rest and peace in an object. It could not be before the death of Christ. It would have been a making light of sin, and the soul could not consent to anything inconsistent with the holiness of God. The Holy Ghost wrought on souls, it is true, but He never dwelt there as the Comforter. Yet there never was before a divine work in which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were not employed. From the first the Son of God did act, and a soul never looked out for Christ but by the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost. But He was never before sent down to take His place here. And when, beloved friends, does He take His place? When the Son came down, a body was prepared for Him with no propensity to sin, as free from it as when He went up again Into glory. It is a remarkable thing that the same word is used in Hebrews in speaking of His coming again in glory, as was used when speaking of His coming to redeem. “In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin:” (Heb. 4:15.) “Unto them that look for him shall be appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” (Chap. ix. 28.)

And if the Son had a body prepared for Him, shall not the Holy Ghost have a body prepared for Him, some suited dwelling-place? Yes; He has one in the saved child of God, the believer, and in a larger sense the Church. But what is the believer, and what is the Church? Is there no sin remaining? We know too well that there is. But yet it is all gone to faith though not to sight. To sight

there is only a poor weak believer, to faith a temple of God. The Holy Ghost has come down. Has God then lowered His character? How can He come down and dwell on this sin-stained earth and in those who themselves are the first to acknowledge how weak and failing they are? Is it that the Holy Ghost feels it not (none can say that He sees it not) Nay, but He is true to the redemption of Christ, and He comes and dwells where the blood has cleansed. The Holy Ghost thus fulfills the type seen in the priests—the oil was put where the blood had been sprinkled. Because of the blood-shedding of Jesus, the Holy Ghost can dwell in us. If I have seen Him and believed in Him, and can trust Him, I am entitled to know what the Holy Ghost witnesses. “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” (Heb. 10:17.) The Holy Ghost stands to and rests upon the blessed completeness of the truth of God's own grace that sin has been judged and put away. There is a scene prepared for Him, a suited body for the Holy Ghost to dwell in.

After having shown on what terms the Holy Ghost was sent, I desire to speak a little of the different relations He bears. The actings of the Holy Ghost went on in the Old and still go on in the New Testament times. There is nothing in Christianity to forbid what the Holy Ghost wrought before, but another thing which is absolutely true now could not have been known before—the Holy Ghost coming down to dwell. When do we first hear of His coming down? On Christ Himself. “Him hath God the Father sealed.” And He goes not away till He has made His people fit for the Holy Ghost to come down and abide with them. And this was a necessary attraction, so to speak. He could not but come to dwell in those who had been washed in the blood of Christ. He does come, and we have here in the passage I have read His different actings. First, “He shall reprove the world of sin.” How that? The world is not a suited place for Him to dwell in, and He does not dwell in the world. This does not mean that He convinces persons of sin; it is another thing from His reproving the soul that God is dealing with.

There is the twofold relation of the Spirit of God on earth. First, His relation to the world. “He shall convince the world of sin.” For breaking the law? No; but because the world would not have Jesus. There is no mention of the law, and no one can afford to maintain the law but those washed in the blood of Jesus. Therefore the apostle says that through faith we establish the law, and nothing does it but faith. Faith shows me that, so far from the law being weakened by the cross, the law had there its most solemn sanction. Then why not take up the law? The Holy Ghost is entirely occupied with Christ. If they did believe in Christ, He would come and dwell in them; but now He testifies against them, and this is very solemn. It shows not what God the Father thinks of the world; He testified that when He raised up Christ from the dead, Him whom man bad cast out; but here the Holy Ghost adds His testimony to the world's guilt, “Of sin, because they believe not in me.” All their other sins are not forgotten; but the Holy Ghost does not speak but of this sin—their refusing not only the Son in humiliation, but the Son at the right hand of God the Father.

“Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more.” The proof of sin is not the breaking of the law, as in Israel. There is a new standing altogether, and the Holy Ghost stands to this and to no other. So in righteousness, it is not here but up in heaven. Jesus is rejected, and righteousness is not here. It is the fruit of His work, and the work of the Holy Ghost is in answer to His; but righteousness is seen only in heaven. God the Father raised up a rejected Christ, and set Him at His own right hand. So the world lost Jesus, and God was righteous when He received Him to His own right hand in heaven. “Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” It is not merely the terrible thing which is coming on the world at a future period—it is done. Judgment is

true to faith now. The world is judged: only the sentence is not yet executed. This is the key to the Christian's remarkable attitude towards the world. How could he tamper with and allow that which he sees to be judged? When he does so, he has got away from his moorings, and is seeing things with his own eyes instead of believing what God says about them. “Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” He (the prince of this world) led it on and he is judged. By the believer Christ is seen, heard, and felt, and the Holy Ghost convicts all outside of Him of these three things.

But what is He to the believer? The believer stands on the confines of all that has been or will be. He is able to look back, and, as to the mind of God, to look onward. It is no presumption, nor imagination. Christ is come. We have seen Him; and He is the truth; and the Holy Ghost helps us to understand things better than ever they could have been understood before. Christ says so. The veil is removed. I am brought to God. It is not that God is brought to me. It is not only that Christ is come to me in my misery, but now I am brought to God. I see Christ as God beholds Him, and all the believer does here is learning more (and oh what joy it is!) of what we have forever in Christ. He is the standard for everything.

To the Church the Holy Ghost's main office is the unfolding of Him. “He shall not speak of himself.” This does not mean He shall not speak about Himself, but He shall not speak on His own authority. As Christ when here on earth was always a dependent One, always spoke as He had heard of the Father, so the Holy Ghost takes His place.

We never hear of the rule or reign of the Holy Ghost. Though the expression is much in use among Christians, and even well-taught ones, it is not in scripture, and it tends to falsify the relation of the Holy Ghost to Christ. I allow He is the power and energy, but Christ is the Lord. When speaking officially the apostle says, as there is one God, so there is one Lord—Christ. The truth is, we lose the blessed present force when we put things in one general expression, and power in dealing with souls is lost too.

The Holy Ghost takes the place of subordination to Christ, “He shall glorify me.” This is the official relation He is pleased to take upon Himself as a divine Person come down to act towards the world and in the saints. “He shall show you things to come.” It is not only understanding truth, but sheaving future things. Can we wonder at this? The wonder would be if a divine person had come down to earth and did not show things to come. To Daniel the command was, “Seal up the vision.” To the believer, “Blessed is he that readeth and they that understand.” “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” How comes this? Christ being come, and the Holy Ghost being come, it was natural that it should be so (I mean natural in a true holy sense). Now that God has met sin, and dealt with evil and blotted it out, so that it is gone as an abstract truth; if I believe, it is mine that is gone.

Now it is for communion that the Holy Ghost is given. When the Holy Ghost acts by and by, when the Church is gone, it will not be as a Spirit of communion, but of prophecy. This will throw the saints back into the position which they had before the Lord's death. But this is not our position.

As the Bride we are conscious of the Lord's love. There is a hymn which speaks of the “earnest of His love.” It is not the Spirit of God who uses this language. God does not love us in part, but perfectly. The Holy Ghost is the earnest of the inheritance, giving us a foretaste of glory, as it said,

“the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you,” associating our souls with it because we are associated with Christ in glory. But when the Lord tells us that the Father loves us as He loves the Son, did He love Him with a bit of His love, with the earnest of His love? No. And it is true of every Christian person now that the Father loves him as He loves His Son. In glory the love will not be more or better than it is now, but then things will be brought into accordance with the perfectness of the love that rests on us now.

I desire to look at a few other scriptures in the Acts of the Apostles which bear on the subject, before I close, which show us that, as the descent of the Holy Ghost was the Lord's promise, so it was accomplished fully.

In chapter i. we see that the Lord saw His disciples before He was taken up, and led them out to the wonted scene where He bad so often spoken to them words of love. He commanded them to tarry in Jerusalem till they should be baptized of the Holy Ghost, saying, “John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

Thus we see that there was no such thing as the accomplishment of the promise yet. It is true the Lord breathed on His disciples and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost;” but we must carefully distinguish between this and the promise of the Father. There is no question of the difference. I consider that it is a weakness, if not a sin, to talk doubtfully, where God speaks plainly, just as it ill becomes us to speak strongly when God speaks darkly. There is a feeling in some minds as if it were gracious to talk undecidedly, even where God speaks clearly. I therefore feel bound to press this point and to maintain it: first, that when on His resurrection He gave the Holy Ghost to His disciples, this was not the promise of the Father; but, secondly, that when on Pentecost the Holy Ghost came down, this was the promise of the Father. The first proves that the promise was not given yet, the second proves that the promise was given then. “Being by the right hand of God exalted [mark, it is not risen, but exalted], and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and bear.” (Acts 2:33.)

It is wrong to confound the gifts and energy of the Spirit with the gift of the Holy Ghost. The gift of the Holy Ghost and the gifts are two things entirely distinct, and it is a deep dishonor done to the Holy Ghost and a loss to the soul to confound them. The difference is this as to its practical application—many gifts have departed, and the unbelief of the heart is manifested by the thought that the Holy Ghost given on that day is no more here; but the Lord declares that the Holy Ghost, unlike Himself, should abide forever. It is a matter of simple faith as to the truth of Christ. While the gifts for signs have disappeared (and it is not so difficult to justify the wisdom of their disappearance), the Holy Ghost abides in the Church and in the believer, and cannot but abide; as His presence is not the mere recognition of our faith but of Christ's redemption, which abides eternally. The Holy Ghost cannot but abide, and this is a truth about which there can be no compromise. Compromise must be dangerous and it is unbecoming those who have been brought out of a state of unbelief to get back into it. Beware of disallowing the truth of God, or of in any way weakening it. This is a truth which we are called to maintain, that the Holy Ghost is on the earth and in the believer till the return of that blessed One who is coming again and coming shortly.

I should like just now to refer to two or three scriptures which sometimes perplex souls. One difficulty felt is this, that in some cases the Holy Ghost was given with the laying on of hands (and we know how this fact has been worked up into a system of superstition); but Christians should

beware that the abuse of any truth does not make them let that truth slip altogether. We know that on the mightiest occasion on which the Holy Ghost was given, which was at Pentecost, there was no laying on of hands. So that it is a mistake to think that it is a necessary thing. “Repent,” says Peter, “and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” This was the order: first, the mighty work of God in the conscience—repentance; second, baptism; and third, the gift of the Holy Ghost—not the gifts of the Holy Ghost nor miraculous power (they might have that too), but the presence of a divine person in them. They had to be baptized; they were obliged and commanded to be baptized. There was no laying on of hands in this case.

In chapter x. there is another striking occurrence. Cornelius heard first the words of the gospel as sent to the Gentiles. The first time when God sent to declare salvation to the Gentiles as freely as to the Jews, the Jews might be startled that it was given as freely to the Gentiles as to themselves. So here there is no word of baptism first and then the gift of the Holy Ghost. Are there then different modes in the actings of God? In anything is there caprice in the divine dealings? Let no such thought enter our minds as to Him. There is none in the ways of God. But there is divine wisdom. Let us inquire wherein the wisdom shines, wherein the blessed wisdom and consistency in the ways of God that the Jew should be baptized and then receive the Holy Ghost, and that the Gentile should receive the Holy Ghost and then be baptized. The reason was this. To a Jew it was a most painful thing. In becoming a Christian he had crossed a fearful gap, which separated the man from Judaism. It was a stepping out of all that which he had been in before and putting himself under the banner of the crucified One. Therefore he must be baptized. The apostle insists on it. They must bow to Him whom they had crucified—bow to Him who was the nation's shame. So they bowed and the Holy Ghost came upon them. This was the order as to the Jew. But why not as to the Gentiles? Peter had been sent to them by a particular revelation, but contrary to his own inclination. Christ had told them to make disciples of all nations; but he had as good as forgotten it. It was as if he had never heard it. Nay, in the vision we read, he even disputed with the Lord. His Jewish feelings were strong. But the Lord compelled him by His grace, Cornelius sending to him too; and, though at first disposed to shrink back at their approach, he was led out of Judaism. In proclaiming salvation, Peter maintains the place of the cross to the Jews in baptism, but with the Gentiles all was done to encourage them. The desire of God was not only to give them confidence, but to remove the prejudices of the Jew. It was as if the Lord had said to the Jews, You despise these men, but I am doing to them what I did not to you, giving them the Holy Ghost before baptism: they are only too glad to get Jesus. So the Holy Ghost fell as soon as the words came from the lips of the apostle. God was thus humbling the proud Jew, confirming the despised Gentile, and silencing every heart by the wonders of His grace. Is there then any change in the Holy Ghost? Is there any change in Christ? Away with such thoughts!

But there are cases where we find hands laid on for the Holy Ghost to be given. Is there no wisdom in this? Surely there is, beloved friends. In chapter viii. we find that on the persecution which arose at Jerusalem the disciples were scattered, and “Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them.” Now this might have been thought to be an irregular thing. Samaria was the last place where a Jew would go to preach, so great was the jealousy with regard to it (and there is no jealousy so bitter as that of religion). But Philip goes and works many wonders, so that we may say, if Jerusalem rejected, Samaria accepted the message of salvation,

and there was great joy in that city as became those who heard of the name of Jesus. But the Holy Ghost had not yet been given, for God had determined to set His seal on the work in the most significant manner. Those at Jerusalem might have said, We cannot accredit the work. Who sent Philip there? for the apostles had not been scattered. But Peter and John go down to Samaria in distinct recognition of the work. It was owned to be of God by those put in the place of church pillars, in order to meet the charge poor man might have made of irregularity. Peter, and John laid their hands on the disciples, and they received the Holy Ghost. It was not merely God overruling what had been done; no, it was God Sanctioning it by an unusual step. But so far from its being a regular mode, it was exceptional, done for the purpose of meeting peculiar circumstances and stopping the mouths of gainsayers. There could not have been a method more gracious and wise. As God had given, the Holy Ghost to the Gentiles without the laying on of hands, now in blessed grace and perfect wisdom He bestows Him by this means.

The last passage to which I shall refer is in Acts 19 “Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost, &c. They Were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus: and when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.” The persons mentioned in these verses were believers, but they were not Christians. A Christian is a saint that has the Holy Ghost. True, every Christian is a saint, but he is something more; and that something is a very great deal more, for it is the Holy Ghost. This we learn clearly from the passage. Paul asks, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? It was no question of believing. Paul did not doubt the existence of faith in their hearts. They were disciples of John; and all John's disciples believed that Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost; but they were not aware that the promise had been accomplished, which is all that is meant by their saying, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. Paul commands them to be baptized, and when he had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues. You see these two things are quite distinct. Is it not contrary to the word of God to confound the gifts of the Holy Ghost with the Holy Ghost Himself? These were only the outward vouchers to other people that the Holy Ghost had come upon the disciples. But why was it necessary that Paul's hands should be laid on them? I undoubtedly think that it was because the question might be raised whether Paul was an apostle. And here the same result follows as with Peter and John in Samaria. This seems to be the great point here, as in Samaria it was the connection of the work there by the great heads of the circumcision with the work in Jerusalem. Here the apostle of the Gentiles has the same voucher conferred on him as on Peter and John: only that what they did together he did alone, as he says, “In nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles.” “Are they ministers of Christ? I more.”

Let none then be afraid of the, question, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost?” It is a subject full of comfort, so that we need not be alarmed. Have I received the Holy Ghost? To know this I must ask first, Have I submitted to the righteousness of God? Am I resting on Christ and His work? Whoever rests thus has the Holy Ghost. It is not a question of the person's knowing it. He may or he may not understand it. Intelligence does not give the Spirit; nor does a bad system nullify the gift of God. Arminianism or Calvinism may hinder the enjoyment, but not the blessing itself.

But let us at all times carefully distinguish between the Holy Ghost and His gifts. When the Father sent the Son into the world, His presence here was accompanied by miracles, and so the presence of the Holy Ghost was also accompanied by miracles, and it was yet more needful as the world could not see Him. Not that the Church deserved them, but there was more danger of the work being gainsaid and denied.

Attention to the fact that some believers had not received the Holy Ghost gives us the key to the condition of souls in a certain state. When being convinced of sin, there is no ability to rest on Christ; when they are still putting forth fresh efforts after Christ, and have not yet submitted themselves to God's righteousness in Christ, I should hesitate to say that the Holy Ghost was there. That He is working there is true; that He dwells there as the seal of adoption and the earnest of the inheritance I could not say. It would be bold to say so while the soul is in an Old Testament condition, under the legal groaning and darkness which accompanies that condition. But when the soul submits to Christ, all is over. There may be conflict afterward; but where there is real peace, the Holy Ghost is; where there is only joy, I could not say He is. But when God begins a work, He completes it and never rests when He works in grace by His Spirit till He dwells there. But operation in quickening or awakening, when evil is being learned, is not the same as the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in peace and power.

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Chapter 189

Progress of Man—What?

That there is progress in knowledge, in civilization, up to a certain point in man's development as a race, is partially true. That a part of the race has been placed under progressive religious light is also true. But that this is the obliteration of individuality, or of individual responsibility in and according to that state, is utterly and degradingly false.

Now I suppose no intelligent person would deny, that where European civilization has prevailed, the acquirements of one age become in many points (that is, when discoveries are concerned) the elements of the next. Every child who learns astronomy learns the Newtonian, or, if you please, the Copernican system, not the Ptolemaic. But when you say the history of man, it is entirely false. The vastly greater part of the human race remains in statu quo. The Chinese are not more advanced than they were centuries ago. Nor indeed, we may say, any of the Asiatic nations, that is, the greatest part by far of the population of the globe. Indeed, they have in many respects retrograded. None of the Africans have advanced; on the contrary, there also they have fearfully retrograded. In America, Europeans have supplanted the native population, but there has been no advance save in the conquerors. It is a question if Mexico and Peru be as civilized as when Aztecs and Tezcucans possessed the country of Anahuac, and Incas exercised their mild despotism as the legitimate descendants of the sun.

There has been a history of man in those races that have come in connection with the despised people of God, but nowhere else. Somehow or other, the people whose records rationalism delights to call in question are the necessary center, and, I may say, foundation of all known history. The mind of man may speculate with interest on other histories, the ruins of Nineveh, and the hundred-gated Thebes; and Babylon may furnish evidence for antiquaries to build dynasties and histories on; but a documented history of those early days belongs to Israel only. It may, of course, be attacked, and conjectures hazarded to disprove it, as they may be hazarded to make kings out of tombs, and centuries out of priestly traditions; but in Israel alone are the documents there to be disproved. In this history only do we find the principles spoken of as the true education of man. We will speak afterward of the influence of Greeks and Romans on the present age and education of man, but they have nothing to do with man's analogy of educational epochs, which are the law, Christ, and the Spirit: for, of course, we must decently Christianize everything—that is, reduce Christianity to the level of man and his progress.

And this introduces another immensely important point, carefully suppressed in the rationalist's account of the progress of man—I mean, the fact of revelation. The progress of man is spoken of; but the facts in which his progress is estimated are really and exclusively revelations and interventions of God: first, the law, then the Son of man, then the gift of the Spirit. Is this progress essential to a spiritual being? Is this each generation receiving the benefits of the cultivation of that which preceded it?

But let us consider the facts. However man may borrow the principles of his education of the human race from scripture, except to array himself in these borrowed plumes, revelation is totally

ignored and all it contains. If there has been a fall, the progress of the human race, save in its lower aspects, comes to nothing at once. We are fallen beings; there is a guilty soul before God; the whole scene is one departed from and out of the condition He set it in. It is in progress: in what, then? It wants, and wants individually, and in every way, restoration—progress in its highest relationship. Christianity treats man as in this state of alienation from God. It is false, or the theory is false. The law was given, but broken. The Son of man was in the world, but rejected out of it by man, and a work of redemption revealed for a being not in progress, but lost. I reserve the consideration of what thoughts that man must have of God, who, looking at this world's universal state, does not believe in the fall of man.

But further, as to the world's history. The flood has taken place: so the Old Testament teaches, so the Lord declares, as Peter warns that it is by willful ignorance it is forgotten. But if the flood has taken place, the whole race has been judged once, and judged for the progress it had made. That judgment will, it is true, not be repeated, but the now world is reserved for fire. At what point of progress will that come? Have they ever heard of days in which mockers will be, who say, Where is the promise of His coming? for all things continue as they were? of perilous times that will come in, which the scriptures will be the resource of the faithful who continue in the things they have learned?

But I am wrong to reason on scripture with them, as if they believed it. Let us take their own system as they take it up professedly from scripture. That I am not unjust in charging them with ignoring this mighty dealing of God with the world, which, while keeping the place they do, they have not the honest boldness to deny, while introducing what sets it aside, you may easily see. Their words are these: “The education of this early race may strictly be said to begin when it was formed into the various masses out of which the nations of the earth have sprung. The world, as it were, went to school, and it was broken up into classes.” Now this refers to the confusion of tongues at Babel. You would suppose that, before this education of the race, when a wiser master began to deal with and educate it, in order that there might be some hope of the race's turning out well, it had been, as yet, nurtured in the graceful affections and first confiding impressions of the home of its childhood. Alas! no. It was a world outcast from God, so bad that He had to destroy it. The childhood of man before it went to school was violence, and that followed by sensuality, fallen or not. But the flood—no trace of it is found.

We are told, that the earliest commands almost entirely refer to bodily appetites and sensual passions. This may, suit the theory, because they have to be corrected as children, but is otherwise a dream. There is no command before the flood, and after it the one declaration is, “Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” It appears that willfulness of temper, germs of wanton cruelty, characterize childhood, and are easily corrected by a mother; but here there was no education, no wise educator. The Governor of the world left the childhood of man to itself, to run into wanton violence unrestrained, to perfect its evil education without any restraint at all. This was a singular system of the education of the human race. “Each generation receiving the benefit of the cultivation of that which precedes it.” “The easily corrected cruelty was here,” we are told, “developed into a prevailing plague of wickedness.” Now let the reader remember that this was (to take Hebrew dates) as long a period nearly as since Christ—some 1656 years. But this is not all; from thence to the giving of the law there were some 800 years. That is, during some 2500 years the race did not get any education at all; and if that history is to be

believed, the whole race, save eight persons, had been destroyed because of the result of the education they had given themselves. But this is not only a discrepancy in the analogy, but it upsets the whole system. There was no such education going on. The world went on upon another principle, leaving man, not without witness indeed from God, but otherwise to himself and with no education. And (if scripture is to be believed as to one of the most solemnly attested facts in it) the whole world was judged once, before its alleged education began.

But here we stumble on another strange instance of the falseness of all this. Not only were there 2500 years of the race without any education at all, if we pass over the flood, and the whole world judged if there was, and the theory an absurdity; but, even supposing this left aside, the facts are misstated.

“The education,” we are told, “of this early race, may strictly be said to begin when it was formed into the various masses out of which the nations of the earth have sprung.” That was at Babel, or in Peleg's time; but there were some 700 years between Peleg and the law, so that the education of the human race began 700 years before it began. And I pray you to remark, that this is not a question of confounding chronology with a great principle. The theory is, that the dividing into nations strictly begins the education; it was the forming them into classes. But the very vital principle of this system of analogy with individual education is that it began with law, though there were more than seven centuries between the two.

Scripture treats man as a sinner, to be restored to God or judged: rationalists, as a race to be educated, and the previous parts sacrificed to the condition of a little fragment at the end. It is a base idea, but it is its justness we have now to think of. Now, in scripture we are carefully told that, in the sense in which there was an education and progress in it, law was not the beginning. The promise came 430 years before it. Now, this is an all-important principle. It brings in God, whom rationalism leaves out. Grace (only in germ, it is true) precedes law, and law comes in by the by, as a needed convincer of the conscience. That is the divine, the blessed form of education revealed in the word, because it reveals God, and must reveal, therefore, love and grace. Law may be needed. It was needed. The question of righteousness must be raised. But God had to say to it, and grace, and goodness, and love must be the point of departure with Him, because He is it, and is it with man. Theirs is an education of man without God; and therefore, as they cannot deny “the prevailing plague of wickedness,” they begin with man's only remedy, commandments, to an unintelligent nature. But think of such a scheme which lets the person to be educated get to a prevailing plague of wickedness before they begin to educate him. It is well they leave God out. But this confusion of Peleg's time and the law, this lapse of some seven centuries, omits facts which show, in another respect, the falseness of the whole system. After Babel, or Peleg's time, when nationalities and races had been formed, a kind of departure from God came in of which we find no trace before.

It was not violence and evil; that is the recorded state of man before the flood. Now, man had been forced to recognize divine judgments. But far from the true God, yea, not liking to retain the true God in his knowledge, he changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator; changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Your fathers, says Joshua, worshipped other gods beyond the flood; Terah, the father of Abraham, and the

father of Nahor. Now the God of glory appears to Abraham, and calls him to leave entirely the system into which, as is justly remarked, God had formed the world—countries, and kindreds, and father's house. The world was broken up into classes, but when God began to educate, He called out of all the classes one to be for Himself; not indeed by law, but then He gave the promises. The principle of a called people, or saint, was brought out, and Abraham became, as an immense principle, the father of the faithful, who were known as called out of the world. That the world was educated by it is absolutely false. The world, or the nations, had rejected God altogether, and taken devils to be their gods; and God, patient in mercy, begins a race of His own, calls Abraham and his seed, be they in the flesh or in the Spirit.

I have partially noticed some particular proofs of the progress of the world according to the rationalists; but, as they belong to this epoch, I will refer to one or two of their discoveries here. Lamech makes no comparison of himself with God whatever. It is all a dream. Unless taking vengeance is comparing oneself with God, because vengeance belongs to Him. If so, many are guilty of it still, I fear. At any rate, he compares himself with Cain, and he is not God, I suppose.

As to building a tower high enough to escape God's wrath, it is rationalist ignorance, not that of the sons of Noah. They acted very wisely according to man. They made, what Nebuchadnezzar tried afterward, and a man who founds empires ever does, a great public center which could be a name—which God alone ought to have or give—that they might not be scattered, but have united force. It was to be a Rome in the world. It was not ignorance, but profound political skill, met the power of One who had other purposes; and under His hand it brought on the very thing they wished to avoid. They built a city and a tower, a central capital to unite them all as one great company, and a tower which should distinguish itself, and to which all should be bound as belonging to it.

But to return to our history. God separates a people carefully from the world, and gives them a law when He has separated them. The world was never under tutors and governors at all. When God dealt with the world, He returned, and returned necessarily, to the principle of grace, on which alone, even if law existed, He could really deal with a sinner. The education of the world never began with law. The world never had any law. God did give a law to a carefully isolated people, and carefully isolated them by it—made, as it is expressed, a middle wall of partition, so that, if a Jew associated himself with the world, be was a defiled and guilty Jew. No doubt in this law great principles of moral government lay, I may almost say, concealed; but this only proves still more the great truth. God must separate a people out of the world to deposit, in a system carefully excluding others, the perfect rule of creature estate; and to preserve the knowledge of one true God in a world given to idols in their will, and given up by Him to a reprobate mind to work all uncleanness with greediness (as every one who has studied the working of heathen idolatry knows they were, and indeed are; and the whole system to be a consecration of vice in its filthiest and most abhorrent shapes). Yet these efforts of God with Israel were fruitless, and the law given in vain. Israel first went after idols; and when that unclean spirit was gone out, their house was empty, swept, and garnished; they neglected the pearl which the blessed Lord drew out of the setting of the law, turned its outward ceremonies, which unregenerate flesh could perform, into their righteousness, and hardened themselves against grace and Him that brought it. So true is it that the law was not given to the world to educate it, and that the education of the world is not in God's thought, but Israel, in order to be taken as a people, is redeemed out of it. Till that redemption

there is no dwelling of God with man—not in Paradise, nor even with Abraham. When redemption is even figuratively presented, it is said (Ex. 29), I have brought them out of the land of Egypt that I may dwell among them. Hence, as God's dwelling with man is never seen, so holiness is never spoken of till then. Because redemption is necessary to man's being near to God, and that is (morally understood) holiness. The moment (Ex. 15) Israel is out of Egypt, holiness is spoken of. No doubt, all this was in an outward carnal way then; but the principle taught is all-important. Doubtless there were holy persons before; but here great principles are revealed.

It is a point to me most striking in the character of this system. You may have the law for a schoolmaster; Christ and the primitive church for an example; the Spirit to set you free, and leave you to yourself to be guided by the Spirit within. You may have Greece to teach you taste, cultivation, and logic; Rome, self-restraint, obedience, and patriotism; medieval popery, to keep Clovis in order. But God revealing Himself, revealing Himself in love, so as to draw out the heart, to teach it goodness by its enjoying Him, so as to link the heart with Himself, and raise it above the carnal and worldly and selfish interest of this low and sin-ridden world; God producing the reflection of His own nature in the thankful and enlightened heart; God revealing Himself to man, so that he should taste and enjoy what He is—no, that must not be. The thought of being thus imitators of God as dear children—you must not seek it here. Everything but God, everything for man to think well of himself by, to be what Paul calls gain to him (that is, the nurture of self); but God, no! no revelation of Him must enter into the education of man.

And then if he be a sinner, introducing God must be accompanied by that which reconciles the sinner to His nature, according to its own holy and blessed qualities. This brings in redemption; and the education of the world is trifling, immoral nonsense. You must give up that which alone elevates man, his association with God or associate him with Him according to what He is. The nature and character of God must be maintained, or it is not with Him I am associated. And I must have morally the qualities which judge of good and evil, as He does, to be really associated with Him. But I do judge the evil, and see the guilt. Now Christianity meets this, and gives me a full blessing, because it gives me life. “He that hath the Son hath life.” He is a life-giving Spirit. But then, besides that, it takes away all guilt from me. I can judge evil fully in my heart and conscience, because I know that I shall never be judged for it—that Christ has by Himself purged my sins, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. I affirm that, without these two principles (a new life and the perfect purging of sins according to God's nature by redemption), no real moral elevation of man can take place, because he cannot be spiritually associated with God according to the perfection of God's nature. The communication of the divine nature, though absolutely necessary, does not suffice, because the communication of that nature makes one judge evil as God does, at any rate in principle. I see the selfishness and impurity that is in man's mind—that is now in mine. And for that very reason, I see guilt and wretchedness in myself. I have the conscience of evil or guilt (not necessarily by crimes or vices, but by comparing my whole inward life with the loveliness of the divine nature) on my soul; my conscience must be purged for God, as a consciously responsible creature before Him, that my heart may be free before Him, that His holy nature, which must repel evil, and which is the very source of my delight, may be maintained even for my soul to enjoy.

Sin separates from God, though we see He is love; but the purging the conscience by a work done without us, and which is perfect in glorifying God, gives me an unhindered delight in Him, and, I

may add, in the love which has done it. God has put this in the simplest way, blessed be His name, for simple souls, but it is of the deepest moral necessary truth. You may have amiable men, but no God, if you have not this.

Holiness is the quality of a nature which repels evil in its nature, and delights in what is good. Righteousness is founded really on the same principle, but brings in the authority of God, which judges of this and the responsibility of the creature. Now, man will admit holiness, because that exalts man, makes him like God, excellent in himself; he has “no guile.” Righteousness he does not, because this asserts God's authority, the creature's responsibility. It is making good God's authority against evil by judgment, our real relationship to God. This man will not submit to. He is willing to be free from guile; it exalts him in his own sight. But to be under guilt, no; that humbles him. How subtle evil is! But a personal conscience makes all simple. I do not discuss with a bad conscience; I can principles with my reason. With a bad conscience I want cleansing, and, because I have offended a loving Father and God, forgiveness too; and, thank God, I have it in Christ. There is no personal having to do with God without this. I may theorize and honestly enjoy my ideas; but theorizing is not the knowledge of God. A truly upright soul, a divinely taught soul has a moral need that the love of God, the favor which is its light and its joy, should be a righteous favor (as scripture speaks, grace reigns through righteousness), and hence, that God should righteously not see sin upon it—has need, therefore, that the conscience should be purged. And this it has through the truth, that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses from all sin. Without it, God's love would be an unholy love—would not be God or love at all. We walk in the light, as God is in the light; and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. Hence comes that bright and blessed testimony, though there in outward figures—He hath not seen iniquity in Jacob, nor beheld perverseness in Israel.

The principle of the theory is each successive age incorporating into itself the substance of the preceding. The analogy is: the law, Christ, and the Spirit. But this wholly contradicts the principle. These are no incorporations of past growth or acquirements, but specific revelations of a full and absolute character in themselves—indeed, as to the last two, the actual coming of divine persons. Not only so, but the law was given when men had plunged into every loathsome wickedness, and had learned to worship devils instead of God; so that God had given them up to a reprobate mind, even as to what became them as men. And it was given, therefore, to a people carefully separated out from the rest of the world. It was no progress; it was a revelation to a peculiar people. When Christ came, it was after this had been broken, and the people become a whited sepulcher. He likewise, though introducing universal principles, separates a people to Himself, and is entirely rejected by men. When the Holy Ghost comes, we know on the Lord's own authority, that the world cannot receive Him, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him.

In a word, it was no progressive incorporation by one age of the acquirements of the last; but revelations given to a people separated to receive them. The first, because men had departed utterly from; the second, because the depositaries of the first had broken and falsified it, as they crucified Him who came. As to the third, it was manifested in power at the first; and instead of progress or development, there has been a corruption by the denial of the pre. sense of the Spirit, and setting aside the word, which has made the annals of the Church the most painful history the world can show (as has been insultingly said, the annals of hell); and if the degradation of heathenism was more open, it was not so morally abominable, nor clothed with the forms of

Christian grace. Sin among heathens was horrible to the last degree, and consecrated to deities who were only devils to help men's lusts; but there were no Christian indulgences to allow or forgive it, no tax for what it was to be compounded at, no selling of grace and license for what was condemned. This was reserved for what is called the Church, and in the outward sense justly.

And remark here another point of vast importance in the present day, when development is so much spoken of. What God reveals is revealed perfect in its place and for its purpose at first; and man declines from it. There is progress in the character of God's revelations, compared with one another; but in themselves none. There cannot be progress in a revelation. It is itself. There may be in revelations. A revelation is given perfect. Man declines from it or corrupts it. That man should make progress in a revelation denies its nature. Now the things rationalism speaks of were revelations; different in nature; but still revelations. And when I come to Christ, I find another immensely important truth—to talk of progress here is blasphemy. He is God manifest in flesh. He is perfection. Hence the apostle John tells us to abide in that which we have heard from the beginning.

And I find here too a principle of scripture, the ignorance and denial of which is the root of all these errors and modern reasonings. The scripture (I am not now to inquire whether its whole system be false) presents Christ as a second man, a new starting-point of the human race, the last Adam. There is no progress of man in flesh spoken of. He is to put off the old man, or has done so, and put on the new, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. He is to reckon himself dead, he is crucified with Christ. Paul speaks of when we were in the flesh. That is, the blessed and admirable doctrine of scripture is the absolute moral judgment of man as man, a child of Adam in flesh, because sin is there; and, in the delight the new man has in God, he cannot bear sin. He has crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts, and lives as alive to God in the last man. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

And, accordingly, the great ordinances of Christianity declare this as its nature. We are buried in baptism unto death, and, risen in Christ, we celebrate a Christ in the Lord's supper, not who has instructed us (though blessedly He has done so those who are quickened, and warned the dead), but died for us. Thus Christianity is founded on the total condemnation of the old man (only that Christ has died for it in grace, and thus as a sacrifice for sin condemned sin in the flesh), and the introduction of a new man, and this connected in the power of Christ's resurrection with that which is heavenly, where Christ now sits. The object of this new life is not here, though its display is. It is the true character of power in a creature to live in the circumstances it is in, from motives and a power which are not found in them, or else he is governed by them (that is, is weak). So with the Christian: with peace in his conscience through a dying Christ, he has a heavenly Christ before him; and his motives being wholly out of this world, he has, through grace, power to live in it according to the character of the motives which govern him.

This is not the place to unfold all the exquisite internal beauty of this principle, wrought out for its perfecting in dependence on grace, in the midst of the conflicts in which we are in a world of evil, with a lower nature in itself prone to it; and the continual association with Christ, our glorified Head, the Man at God's right hand, in which it is made good, so as to grow up to Him who is the Head of all things. This would be to unfold the contents of all the epistles, as the development of it in teaching, and the gospels as the exhibition of the perfection of it in Christ.

But I have said enough to show that the system of the New Testament is the setting aside of the old man, the flesh, the first Adam, because there is sin (and sin is become unbearable when the true light, Christ, is in the heart as life), and the possession, the substitution for that, of the new man, Christ our life, unfolded in a life which we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us. Was He a point of progress in the development of human nature, or Adam-fallen life, or the perfect exhibition of a new thing, that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us, and became the source of it to others, while He has died for the guilt and sin which characterized the old?

Life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel but this life did not begin to exist then. Christ, who is the Lord from heaven, is a life-giving Spirit—has not merely a living soul, though that He had of course. And He communicated this life to others from Abel, I may well say and doubt it not, from Adam downwards. But then, for that very reason (though the great contrast, the enmity of man, of the carnal mind, against God was not brought out till the Cross, when the perfection of God revealed in flesh was fully presented), those who partook of this life through grace were hated and rejected of the world, whose boasted progress is depicted to us by the new philosophy. He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit. They were moral contradictions: one loved God, judged self, and owned God's authority; the other sought self, and would have none of God for that reason. Conscience there was and is in all: conscience judges good and evil: but a new life is good in a divine way. Hence you will find that, with all this modern school of rationalism, even in its most infidel forms, Christ will be recognized, provided He be a restorer of what the scripture denounces as flesh. They will use what appears to many a simple mind Christian language; but the just condemnation of a sinner, the absolute condemnation of flesh, and a new life in Christ, and atonement for the sin of the old—all this will not be heard of; and into this anti-Christian system even Christians fall. It exalts man; and all the blessed light of God, the heavenly place into which Christ is entered, is lost.

Discoveries, by which the knowledge of nature or the power of man over it is advanced, are undoubtedly multiplied. We know more physical facts than our ancestors. Astronomy, geology, on the one hand, and railroads, telegraphs, chemistry, on the other hand, have enlarged, not the domain, but the appropriation of the domain allotted to man. And with every increase of knowledge there is a reaction. There is more reality and less hypothesis on all these subjects; but I doubt the development of much more than materialism by this. That this is a progress I more than doubt. As regards taste and cultivation, or intellectual powers, I should think also progress more than doubtful. All now is, at best, imitation. Take Grecian architecture or Gothic styles, whose ideal conceptions are the opposite side of one another;

take even Italian, all attempted is imitative. In intellectual power, I suppose Grecian and Roman was as developed in itself as any now. Plato, Aristotle, or (what was more profound than either) the British triads or Bardic philosophy, present the expression of as powerful thought. And as to language it is admitted, that as an instrument of thought, the Greek stands, of all commonly known languages, unrivaled. The powers of Sanscrit I am unacquainted with, and but little with the capacities of the daughter which most resembles it, they say, the Irish. In philosophy there is more truth in modern times, so far, not, as there has been progress, but as revelation has exercised an influence on it, and no farther. So that I do not see great progress even in these earthly things.

As to philosophy, all is necessarily false at all times, because it reasons upon the present state of man as a normal one, or else it becomes theology, and, thereupon as its necessary point of departure, upon his relationship to God, and what God is. Hence it is all necessarily false, both as to God and as to man. It is in vain to say that you must not bring religion into philosophy, because unless religion be fable it is the truth, so that it is only saying that you must not bring in truth. There, I believe they have told the truth. That man is not fallen is a calumny against God. A God who made this world directly as it is would be a weak or a cruel God. But if man be fallen and in rebellion and have to say to God in that state; if his whole moral condition be the acquired knowledge of good and evil, far from the source of good, then reasoning upon his relationships to God to prove what they are normally is to reason always against the truth. And that goes far deeper into the whole system than men are generally aware of It affects every possible relationship of life. It is the reason there are magistrates, the origin of property, of labor, death, inheritances. I take the commonest, everyday, outward things on purpose. Philosophy, since it ceased to be cosmogony, is reasoning on morality, ignorant of the groundwork of the highest obligations, and of the whole state of things on which moral relationships are founded. Nothing can be right or set right if the world has departed from God because all its state is wrong; the central obligation is lost which was the groundwork of all others, though those others be true—unless we bring in the restoring power of revealed goodness applied to that state, and this is Christianity. Hence it is a necessary consequence, that all philosophy is, and must be, false, There is evidence enough that evil exists, that sin exists; the man who will say that things are morally as they ought to be is a devil, and not a man, take heathens or Christendom. If they are not, there is no sense in not beginning with the truth of this state and its remedy, if there be one. But this is religious truth.

Chapter 190

The Promises to the Seven Churches

There is a point of much interest, which I desire to trace, in connection with the promises to the seven churches. It will be found, on an examination of these promises separately, that they embrace all that God had committed to man, or to the nation of Israel, under responsibility to the giver; but which had been forfeited either through weakness or willfulness, and had been in this way stolen by Satan out of the hands which were incompetent to hold them

God had been good, supremely good, as these promises or actual gifts prove, which He so bountifully showered in the path way He had chosen for Himself and His creatures. Into this path He had, in sovereign grace, called out the patriarchs to walk with Him as “the God of glory,” and with His people Israel under the covenant name of “Jehovah.” But a driven-out man from Eden, and a scattered nation from Canaan, tell plainly and sadly of Satan's triumph, of man's disgraceful defeat, and of God's consequent dishonor. Nevertheless, this great fact was established, that the creature to walk with God (as a receiver of blessing) must in life and nature correspond with Him whose delight it is to bless: otherwise must responsibility be, when man is put to the test, but a temporary triumph for the devil.

The book of the Revelation introduces us to “One like unto the Son of man,” who laid His right hand upon John, saying, “Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” It is the presence and position of such an One as He who thus proclaims Himself that turns the whole course and order of things round again to God, for His eternal glory with His creatures, but only as redeemed by the blood of His own Son. By His intrinsic obedience when on earth, an obedience unto death, and by His righteous title as “the first-begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth,” He gathers up, and connects with His person, as Son of man, every promise and gift which man had forfeited, and holds them till the day when “all the promises of God which are now made yea and amen” shall be manifestly established “to the glory of God by us.” In the meanwhile, till Christ comes to receive us to Himself, He gives to those who “have an ear to hear” a present communion, in the joy of knowing that these promises and gifts are embodied in Himself; and those can best testify how precious this fellowship is who have tasted deepest what forfeited blessing means.

These remarks may suffice to introduce our subject to us, and in confirmation of the fact that the Lord, in His visit of inspection to the seven golden candlesticks, gives these promises out afresh, in connection with Himself to this last vessel of responsible testimony on the earth before He comes, let us take them up in the order in which they are presented by John in the Apocalypse.

To the church in Ephesus He says, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” Here we get the earliest of the forfeited gifts between Adam and the Creator in the garden of Eden, “so God drove out the man.” But in the new title of “I am he that liveth” the Lord grants the promise in redemption order, as well as in resurrection power; and leads the overcomer to eat of the tree of life (of which Adam never ate) which is in the

midst of the paradise of God, where the first man never was. A garden in Eden is lost, it is true; but the paradise of God is gained. The flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the tree of life, is sheathed by the knowledge of a crucified Christ; and He who was dead takes the place of the cherubim and affirms— “I will give to eat of the tree of life and in the paradise of God.”

Let it be observed, this new bestowment is not merely regaining a place of blessing between God and man, but, being now embodied in Christ, acquires a fullness of meaning which His own worthiness before the Father brings into it, for the eternal delight of Himself and the redeemed, where the tree of the knowledge of good and evil never grew.

The promise to the church of Smyrna is “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” This recognizes the fact that sin had come in where the Creator and the creature were once together, walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and that as a consequence the crown bad fallen from the head of Adam, the fine gold had become dim, and death stood before him as the penalty inflicted—the wages of disobedience. But this dark cloud is dispersed by the bright shining of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and makes even death to be the new measure of faithfulness (as it was in His own pathway upon the earth), and puts upon the head of all such the crown of life. Thus each promise gets its fullness from Him in whom God has been glorified; and so death, in the pathway of an overcomer by obedience, is made a power by which he reaches the crown of life. He shall not be hurt by the second death, for “he that loseth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” Even Satan, Who had the power of death, knows by the risen Lord his own defeat. Death cannot hurt. “We have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead.” Moreover, as regards Satan, “Thou shalt bruise his heel, but it shall bruise thy head.”

The promise to Pergamos carries us into the world since the flood, and connects us historically with Israel's journey out of Egypt. “To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.” Man had eaten angels' food, as it is written, “He gave them bread from heaven.” Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead, but Jesus said, “he that eateth of the bread that I shall give him, shall live forever.” The names of the twelve tribes had been engraved, by the skill of the cunning workman, upon all manner of precious stones; and set in the breast-plate of the great high priest of Israel. But these have become things of the past, like the garden which the Lord planted in Eden. Hosea had stood in the midst of a guilty people, and prophesied “the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without Teraphim.” But forfeited blessings are again gathered up by Him who has since trodden this path (as the son called out of Egypt) and substantiated in Himself for this same people in the future day of their history: when they shall say “blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” In the meantime, while all is hidden between the Lord and His heavenly ones (for our life is hid with Christ, in God), we get in himself the hidden manna, and a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, “which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” And this is given out to us by Himself in the new associations in which by grace we “have been circumcised by the circumcision of Christ,” as one with Him in a new and heavenly position, while hidden from all below. We, as new creatures in Christ, can well understand, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, what these secret interchanges mean; and what

the white stone records— “as Christ is, so are we in this world.” Paul was familiar with the stone, and with the new name, and was teaching the Galatians the lesson by it, which they were so slow to learn, that our purification is by death, when he said, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

The promise to the church of Thyatira is “he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star.” Here likewise was Israel's place of pre-eminence among the surrounding nations, though now a forfeited one. Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, and Rome, have in their turn broken in upon her, and spoiled her, like the wild beast of the field, and the boar of the wood. Since those days the hope of Israel, the Messiah, has been in their midst, and wept over the city, saying, “If thou hadst known, even in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes.” And finally, “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled.” He that liveth and was dead has recovered this position of pre-eminence by His own righteous title, and holds it for Israel, till the time comes when she “shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the earth with fruit.” In the meanwhile, He who has embodied this forfeited place of rule and kingly power in Himself, gives it out to the overcomers of to-day in association with Himself; “even as I have received of my Father.” Nor is this all, for as He connects us with this grant, and promise which is peculiarly His own, He unites us in a hope of which He alone is the fulfillment, “and I will give him the morning star.” The saints will be with Him too in the day of retributive righteousness, when He comes out from the opened heavens upon a, white horse, and when the armies which were in heaven follow Him, “clothed in fine linen, white and clean, and out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treadeth the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God.” (Revelation six.) Ignorance of the ways of God, and of His purposes in Christ, can alone explain the fact that the Church has thrown itself into the world's vortex as a peace-maker, and so missed her place of real testimony between God and mankind, as regards the coming forth of the Lord from heaven “to judge and to make war.” That He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood forms no part of the Church's present testimony, and indeed how can it, since it would be against herself for being in a voluntary alliance with the world? Neither the consciences of men are aroused by such a coming forth of the Lord, nor the love of Christ acknowledged, which delivers from this impending wrath upon the living and teeming millions of Christendom, by the preaching of a present salvation for to-day by faith in the atoning blood of the Lamb.

The promise given next to the Church of Sardis carries us still farther on in the history of God's ways with the nation of Israel, and takes up its priesthood. “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” In king Solomon's days, when the ark was placed in the temple and the temple filled with glory, “the Levites, the singers, all of them arrayed in white linen, could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud,” which had taken possession of the entire scene in the name of the Lord. Further, “her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire;” but the same prophet adds, “their visage is blacker than a coal, they are not known in the streets, their skin

cleaveth to their bones." Zechariah skews Joshua the high priest standing before the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. The filthy garments, or the defiled priesthood of Israel, are set aside prophetically, as it will be really, in the future day of their national acceptance, when the fair miter on the priest's head, and the change of raiment in connection with "The Branch," will enable God to remove the iniquity of that land in one day. He who is the first and the last has likewise secured this forfeited place of blessing in Himself, adding to it (as He gives it out to the overcomers of this day) the assurance of its perpetuity. "I will not blot his name out of the book of life [like the blotted page of Israel's history], but will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Our own personal security, and the permanence of every purpose, are alike found in a present companionship with Christ, till He comes. We have it not in the outward display, in which it is to be manifested, and on this account we hold all blessing not merely upon His title who deserves it and has the keys of death and of Hades, but in the delight of His own love. "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." What a place and portion does our sojourn on earth afford us, the little while that we are waiting for His shout and our rapture!

The promise which is given to the church of Philadelphia brings us to the culminating point of Israel's history in its connection with the throne of God; and the earthly center, the focus of this world's light, the city of the great king. These links which constitute the theocracy, in which they lived and made their boast were all broken, and Jehovah "profaned his throne by casting it to the ground." The vision of Ezekiel most touchingly relates how the glory (which was the witness of the Lord's acknowledgment of His people) moved away from its place, till, like Noah's dove, finding no rest for the sole of its foot, it took back the sad tale of desolation to Him from whom it bad come forth. This too has been secured by "the Prince of the kings of the earth" for Himself and for the government of God, and till the day of millennial glory comes gives it out to those who now suffer with Him in communion with Himself. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God: and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God: and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." This is the promise to Philadelphia, an assurance that all which had failed on the earth and been forfeited would now be committed no longer to human responsibility, but be seen to come down from God out of heaven to abide forever. Material pillars and a material temple are superseded; just as atones have been set aside in the spiritual house for living stones, and as God and the Lamb finally take the place of the temple and the city, for that which is perfect is come. In the meanwhile, the Son of man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, says, "I will write upon him that overcometh the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God." What new links of living associations with Himself, in the sanctuary and the glory, are these as He thus puts us into connection with the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God, which is to bring back again the glory of God! But besides this catalog of blessing, the Lord adds, "and I will write upon him my new name." What is this? For many and various are His titles and names of renown. The angels introduced Him as Jesus-Emmanuel, the waters of Jordan gave Him forth as the Messiah or the Christ, the anointed One, the temptation in the wilderness as the victorious Son of man, the cross as the Lamb of God for sinners slain, the sepulcher as the destroyer of him that had the power of death, resurrection as the Captain of our salvation, ascension into the heavens as the Great High Priest and Advocate at the right hand of God, so that we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Redemption by His blood is the new circle into which everything that yet groans is to be brought; and resurrection by His power, the

new holding by which all blessing is maintained forever: Moreover all His enemies are to be made His footstool. There yet remains a new name in which Christ will be manifestly known when He comes forth to put all “the families in heaven and on earth” into relationship with Himself and God. What a day will that be when God and the Lamb are eternally together, and give a new character to the entire scene! Our present joy is in communion with Christ, in the power of this new name, as we keep the word of His patience till He comes.

There is yet another promise to the Church of the Laodiceans: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Promise and prophecy had alike announced Jesus, the Messiah, as the rightful heir to the royalties of David's throne. “He shall be great and be called the Son of the Highest and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” In this title, and with these claims, He presented Himself to Israel when He rode into Jerusalem upon a colt, the foal of an ass, “and all the people cried, Blessed be the king of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord,” But this choicest gift of Jehovah's love they rejected, and set up over His head, when they crucified Him, “This is Jesus, the king of the Jews.” Therefore He is set down with His Father on His throne, cast out by the world! Yet this place of blessing, though forfeited on their part, He holds in His own personal title as “he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.” The rejected king of Israel—rejected by those to whom He came in grace—is nevertheless the One who Says, “Even as I also overcame;” for though death and the grave were the limits of Satan's power, there was a path which the vulture's eye had not seen, and resurrection to the Father's throne declared Him, beyond all controversy, to be the overcomer. “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” It is a present fellowship with Himself, in a way that the world knows not, in which He gives the promise, “I will grant to sit with me on my throne;” for the Church by faith through the Spirit can look into the future and distinguish between the Father's throne where the rejected One is set down, and the Son's throne on which He is to sit and reign, and trace the effect which will follow this change of position. How precious for our souls to discover that throughout all the confusion in the pathway of forfeited or rejected blessing from the starting-point in Eden to the Father's throne, the Lord Jesus Christ has been the glorifier of God and the Savior of the lost! Promises and blessings which were originally put into creature hands are now made “yea and amen in Christ.” Gifts and callings which were necessarily on creature responsibility are waiting to be opened out to the glory of God by us. The creature itself is no longer dependent upon its own expectations, but stands on the new footing of redemption. Another life has been brought into the world by the incarnate Son of God, and, by His death and resurrection, is communicated to all them that believe. “He that hath the Son hath life.” The hour upon which heaven and earth waits is that of which He said, “Of that hour knoweth no man, neither the angels of God, but my Father only.” He will then quit the Father's throne to sit upon His own throne. From that point and by that act above all things below will change into their own respective places and correspondence, either caught up to be forever with the Lord; or by judicial power commanded to depart—consigned to the lake of fire, where the devil and his angels shall be later.

We are come to the end of the history of God's goodness to man in the flesh, and therefore of forfeited blessing. It is unspeakably gracious in our Lord (who has recovered all that was lost both for Himself and for God; and keeps all in His own hands for the coming day of universal glory) to

anticipate that time and give, as we have seen, all these spoils to the overcomers, during the period of His rejection, in a known enjoyment with Himself. In the light of this love, we can accept these promises to the seven churches, and eat the fat and drink the sweet, and know the joy of the Lord to be our strength; while the world is running its own course. heedless of the gathering storm. Or we may take the assurance of the Lord Jesus, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” How very precious to find our souls drawn aside from the glory of man by companionship with Christ; and as overcomers, through a closer walk with Him, to bold these various promises in the secret of the white stone, “and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it!” We become independent of everything under the heavens, by being thus consciously united to Christ, and in all which comes down from God out of heaven. All our blessings, while we are waiting for the Lord, are descending blessings; for “every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning.” We owe nothing to the flesh, nor to the world, nor to Satan, except it be to maintain the fact that we do not. On the other hand we are not our own, but bought with a price, and are set by grace in that new place of glorifying God in our body and spirit, which are His.

The overcomers have but a little while in which to do a great deal. “Behold I come quickly” is His parting word to Philadelphia. “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown,” is the encouraging word to us till He does come.

- B.

Chapter 191

Practical Reflections on Proverbs 7

In this seventh chapter we have another aspect of Wisdom's ways. It is not open wickedness in which the will is active against which it directs its remonstrances; it speaks of the snares laid for those who have no intention to do evil, but whose lusts and passions lay them open to those snares. Hence, the soul is called upon to be previously diligently filled with the precepts and counsels of wisdom that it may be in no way taken in them.

This is a very important point. It is not sufficient (how often has the Christian found it!) not to have any intention to do evil, nor even to have the intention to do right. We are in a world of snares and temptations. We have to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation—to have the soul filled with the divine things of wisdom, and the thoughts of wisdom guiding the mind and the path, so that the allurements of evil and Satan's wiles take no hold upon us. The mind lives in another sphere. It is indeed another nature to which evil is offensive, and which detects it in the allurement itself and deals with that as evil instead of being attracted by it. The precepts and light of divine wisdom fill and guide the thoughts; and evil is evil—is contrary to the state of the soul, walking in lowliness and obedience, not as fools but as wise, simple concerning evil indeed, but wise concerning that which is good. The words of counsel, implying as we have seen obedience and subjection of heart, are to be kept and the commandments of a father laid up. And they are to be kept as well as laid up, and treasured, delighted in, kept before one's mind on the fingers and tables of the heart, and confessed and owned as that with which we are of kin, to keep us from the flatteries and allurements of sin.

The young man void of understanding went, note, the way of her house. It was not a deliberate purpose as verse 21 shows; but the path of wisdom and her precepts would never have led him there—would have led and kept him elsewhere. He followed at least the idleness of his heart. This is a solemn warning. Nor is there light on this path. He was not walking in that light in which a man does not stumble. Not is the conscience ever really good there. It is not an actually bad conscience, but a good conscience is always in the presence of God. “He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.” Here there were passions ready to be ensnared, without a safeguard; and a conscience which darkness suited better than light, which was not walking in the light; idleness of will which had shame, in a measure, of its own ways. It was not a path in the broad daylight of God. And, oh! how great a thing it is, and how blessed a thing I Look at the path of Jesus: where was that? We have greatly to seek this.

But now we have the boldness of a hardened conscience—a terrible thing. A defiled one with a broken heart Christ can meet; but a bold one is a shocking thing. There is no home to such a heart. But the idleness of passion is no safeguard against its ways. It can flatter, awaken lust, be ready to minister to it to win its ways. It reckons on fear in the unhardened, though it has none. It has its means, however false, of guarding against it; for one is a mean thing even if hardened. There was no “good-man” at all. It was naked vice; but stolen waters are sweet, though sin fills

with fear. And the idle soul is caught in snares its will did not seek; but it was none the less the path of death. Nor is it the only snare the idle soul may meet. The soul that does not watch and pray (that is not filled with wisdom's ways and wisdom's thoughts, kept by God's presence) will meet temptation somewhere. Still here it is the snare of the strange woman. Her house is the way to hell. She hath cast down many wounded, and strong men are all her slain. It is not human strength that resists temptation and passion; and such temptation has been the ruin of many who in this world were mighty and even morally mighty. They have fallen under the snare and were ruined; those who otherwise boast themselves have through this been weakness and brought to ruin. The wise man presses it on him who had ears to hear.

Hebrew scholars make here a word which usually means “strong” to mean “numerous.” I confess I do not see why, nor how it can be sound with col—all. Many wounded has she made to fall, and strong ones are all her slain. I do not see the sense of numerous are all her slain; but that strength is of no avail against the snare, figuratively to show the danger and how powerful the snare is. To say that all her slain were strong ones is every way to the purpose. However, this I must leave to abler Hebraists than myself. Only the Hebrew word is everywhere else used for mighty or strong. The Authorized version gives “strong,” but turns “all” into “many.” I confess “strong ones are all her slain” is much more to the moral purpose of the sentence than anything else.

Chapter 192

Practical Reflections on Proverbs 8:1-8

Wisdom is not in this world simplicity, but leads us into it. Simplicity is the blessed result in the highest way, when God is all to the new nature. But God is wise in His ways in ordering all things, and we are now in a scene of evil and a complication of received good and actual evil in will and fact which needs for him who would go aright a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen. In truth there is none in the world in itself. Where all is morally wrong and departed from God, there can be no right path. Adam did not want a path. As to him he had only to stay where he was. When we have gone wrong and are driven out by God and so need a path, none can be found. There is none. But God deals with this scene—now with man in it, hereafter with the scene itself, and has a path and result which was before the worlds and which wisdom points out to us, calling men into it. Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the path of understanding? It is not to be found in the land of the living. Destruction and death say we have heard the fame thereof with our ears. So they have. They tell us the vanity of all the scene we are in, and above all, of man at the head of it, the sorest place of all. But it is only negative. This is an immense truth, that there is no way for living man, fallen from God. This is what is described in the Book of Ecclesiastes. Man under the sun, his will works. What can his will, multiplied in the contentions of many, do? But God understandeth the way thereof and He knoweth the place thereof. He ordered creation, but to man He said, The fear of Jehovah, that is wisdom; to depart from evil, that is understanding. This, as Ecclesiastes says, is the whole of man. That book does not go farther, and it is a deep and immense instruction to get this by itself, the position and condition of man as such ascertained, bringing God and responsibility to him, without reaching Him, but looking at man as he is here, and without revelation, but knowing good and evil, accompanied by the declaration of judgment.

Proverbs takes a wider sphere, because it is occupied with wisdom, not with man simply as he is. Hence we have always God in Ecclesiastes (save the fear of Jehovah at the end), Jehovah in Proverbs. The sphere we live in is one of a perverse will in man, who will not have God, but a knowledge of right and wrong in himself, of the difference of right and wrong. In a scene where nature retains abundant marks of a wise and good Creator, of almighty power, yet in this its lower part in a state of ruin and corruption, away from God and in what man knows to be corruption about Him too; so that when he has not revelation, i.e., the word, he is false, in hopeless subjection to what is false, to rear his altar to an unknown God. Such instinctive knowledge there must be as makes him feel that he knows nothing of Him—a sad condition for a responsible soul. Wisdom, the word of God, comes into this scene, shows what it is, reveals God in it, the way of truth, but that word shows it existing in God before the world was. It looks back to creative wisdom, but to a purpose then set up which will be fulfilled; but it deals with what it meets with and shows with divine light what is the scene and state of things of which I have spoken. Its utterances are the truth and reveal withal the counsels of God. Christ was, and of course is, this wisdom, but He is more, for He reveals God Himself; and then comes in necessarily another thing—grace and truth come by Jesus Christ. This last we have not here. It was foretold and prophesied of, but could not be till the Lord Himself came, and effectually for us only when redemption was accomplished and

He had glorified God. (Comp. Titus 1:1-3 2Tim. 1:9, 10.) But we have the general truth of the activity of God's testimony, which, after all, is grace, His dealing with the consciences of men, and wisdom in the creation, and in a general way that His thoughts and purposes of divine delight rested in the sons of men, accomplished so perfectly in Christ's incarnation, proclaimed so blessedly in the angels' song, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good pleasure in men;” but here too wondrously set forth, sheaving the dealing in truth by wisdom with men, and the unspeakable testimony of where His delight was before the world was—wisdom having its delight where God's delight in eternity was. Its delight was in the sons of men. Now we say, “Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God.”

But the revelation of wisdom and its exercise is in the midst of an evil world. What wisdom has to say she would not have to say, if the world were not evil; yet it is a strange thing and must be wisdom to speak God's truth in such a world. And such it is. We read in Ephesians “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” “Redeeming the time,” means seizing opportunities, as Dan. 2, which I note because it shows the world to be evil and, though under God's hand, still evil to be in power. And then wisdom has to cry. It reveals surely too all the counsels of God in Christ, blessing beyond the evil. We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, wisdom ordained before the world to our glory; but even this is brought about as to the wisdom of the way by the coming of evil and redemption. It is divine wisdom bringing good out of the evil in accomplishing His counsels towards us. Sin, weakness, guilt was our state, but through redemption issuing in glory according to the display of God in that redemption, whose love, mercy, righteousness, supremacy over evil have been glorified in the work of Christ, and we in righteousness brought into that glory; that as sin appeared sin working unto death by that which was good, the perfect law of right for man, so God might appear God by the display of all that He is in bringing us to glory through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here we have it in its elements. We have seen it hitherto as the order of subordinate authority and parental care, the maintenance of paternal order. Here we have something more. The world is evil and wisdom cries aloud in testimony in the midst of the world as it is, though revealing the grace that accompanies wisdom.

“Wisdom crieth and understanding putteth forth her voice.” Wisdom I take to be the gathering up all that experience can give, so as to judge of all things by it, only that in God it is intrinsic knowledge of all things and all their relations and state. This He furnishes to us as far as we are capable of it as creatures in His word. Every word of wisdom is perfect as to that to which it applies. It comes from a perfect divine knowledge of all and our path in it as God sees it. It applies to what we are in, but it comes from God who knows His own mind, in what we are in, and about it, and that He gives—only we know in part. As baying received it now, we have it all ours. “Ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye know all things.” We cannot instruct the Lord, we are told, but we “have the mind of Christ.” As addressed to us, it is the perfect light of God on that of which it speaks to us. The world is in confusion and evil. Grace makes God cry to us in that day. It was present in Christ. (Compare Isa. 1)

Understanding puts forth her voice as wisdom comprehended all and brought divine light to bear on it. Understanding discovered all. Verses 2 and 3 show remarkably the character of this testimony. She meets man where he is, lifts up her voice above the roar and confusion of man's restless activities in this world, meets him in the throng and puts herself forward in the highway of

passage to bring in the light of God, and His claim on man for his good. He summons man's ear to hear and think of something besides the urging of his own will and the turbid stream of his passions and earthly hopes. “To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man.” So Christ, the life, was the light of man. Christ, though He did not lift up His voice in the streets, but only to be so much the more heard of all that had ears to hear, yet sent it on the housetops by His apostles, Himself the perfect subject and wisdom's self rather than the proclaimer of it, yet sowed the word—Christ, I say, was this wisdom displayed in subjective perfection in this world. Every word He uttered was a part of it, and the right part when He uttered it. How He discovered all I need not say. He did not learn wisdom partially by experience, as that which He had not (though as true man He grew in it); but was that which experience is to learn. Sorrows He learned for us, difficulties opposition; but He was wisdom in the midst of it. However, God in active grace brings this to bear on the conscience and hearts of men—says, “He that hath ears to hear let him hear.” The word was proclaimed, on the top of the high pines, in the view of men, in the thronged resorts of men, and where every one must enter that belonged to a human dwelling-place or home. And her address was to men. God's word and wisdom are formed for and expressed to them. When it was there in life, “the life was the light of men;” theirs in divine counsels and adapted to their conditions.

It came to bring the truth, not to find it. It came to the simple and fools; it brought light and understanding to the simple. The hearing ear, through grace, brought to the simplest and most foolish divine wisdom for themselves—a light and guide in all the circumstances they were in. They were excellent things, for they came from God and revealed Him, and they were right things—put everything in its true moral place with God, and with God's authority. For wisdom's month speaks according to the real nature and state of things, and that as to their relationship with God—tells the truth of everything, and is equally abhorrent from all evil itself. This is the great controversy with man's pretensions. He has his own mind the center of all the confusion, leaving out God, and pretending to judge by it the scene of confusion he is in—yea, even to judge God Himself and what He ought to be. Wisdom is bringing, in applicable detail, the light of God and His authority in it into the scene of confusion which is so as departed from Him. The will of man will not have it; his passions and lusts are dearer to him.

Chapter 193

Practical Reflections on Proverbs 8:9-36

But there is another character of divine wisdom; it is straight and simple, because it is profound and perfect. It is itself—itself in the midst of confusion and complication, but always itself. Human subtlety and wisdom must take the tortuous course which seeks to avoid the evil which it belongs to and lives amongst, of which it forms a part, though it may be a cleverer part; but it must act by the motives and passions which govern man, because it has nothing else to act upon nor by. It cannot be above the sphere to which it belongs, though it may see a little farther into it than the simple and foolish; but it cannot see beyond present motives—they are its motives. Divine truth and wisdom bring in God, and what is right, with authority—is it in testimony or in fact—if we take it as embodied in Christ. Hence it is always itself, for it is what comes into the scene, not what is of it, though light in and adapted to it, and acting on conscience i.e., is light to the sense of right and wrong by bringing in God, the fear of the Lord, and hence gives a perfect path. The words are in righteousness, and in righteousness for and in the midst of the scene of will and confusion sin has brought in. I take the most commonplace outward example: “Thou shalt not steal.” In paradise there was no stealing. In heaven there will be none. In a perfect state such a thought could not exist. Yet property and rights of property have introduced confusion and oppression on one side, and violence and wrong on the other—in all ages a problem that no man can solve, and that there is no right to be found in. One form is oppression, another ruin and disorder. Wisdom is content with what it has, and covets no man's; it has the key to a perfect path of its own in the midst of the confusion, because of introducing God and His fear. It takes the heart of man out of all the motives which produce the confusion that exists, and gives it its own path in the midst of it. This is the most commonplace case, which I take on purpose. Hence the Lord declines decision (He came not then to judge) in a case of alleged wrong, and continues, “Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;” and then exalts man's thoughts above such objects even as man, and brings in God as known goodness to those who had faith in Him; and this goes on to the highest display of the life of Christ in us. It was the law's place to mark this path, in fact, for man, not to reveal counsels or redemption or the display. of God in man, but the path of man before God. So far it was wisdom, but it could not display God in counsels or in love connected with them, or it would not have been a law for man. Now we learn not man before God, but in Christ, God before man, our rule of life, though this will surely not violate the other—against such (ο■κ ■στι ν■μος) there is no law. Thus there is nothing tortuous (froward) nor twisted winding through the evil ways and corrupt motives of men to find an advantageous path through them.

Hence he who walks by divine wisdom is counted a fool—told he will be a prey to the world, for the world after all reckons on evil and looks to its subtlety as its resource, to knowing more evil and plans to circumvent it. But obedience to the word is divine wisdom; for divine wisdom, that knows all things, has formed the path. We have to walk according to that lovely and divine precept that grace only could give us— “Simple concerning evil, and wise unto that which is good.” Hence to him that understands—has an ear and capacity to receive what is divine—they are all plain. They

are God's path, declared by Him, what leads in a straight and blessed path which is its own—that in which Christ walked. He that finds knowledge discerns that they are upright, right in themselves—the divine mind in us, we can say.

Now the new man discerns the uprightness of this path. As the Lord says, “Wisdom is justified of all her children,” though the world see not or hate it. Plain is that which is straight before us, ■■■■■■■, “Let their eyes look right on;” compare chap. iv. 25, where the word “right on” is the same as “plain” here, and “straight” the same as “right': here. It is all simple to him that takes divine light for his guidance, in thankful submission to Him who gave it. The path of Christ is the perfect expression of it—He is the wisdom of God. In value surely nothing can be compared with it—to have God's way, and that a right one, through a world of evil. But there is, in a world like this, need of not being fools but wise. And divine light sees everything in divine light, and detects at once its character. It is of the profoundest subtlety in this way. It has the discernment of God. A scene of satanic deceit is perplexing to the mind perhaps. What is it? The entrance of it is contrary to the fear of the Lord; the whole thing is judged, though I cannot account for the hundredth part of it. The soul, not guided by the fear of the Lord, plunges into a scene beyond its powers, and is the sport of Satan. The fear of the Lord and the Spirit of truth, for the simplest mind, has preserved from and judged it all. But it is really the subtlest judgment which the humanly wise are taken in. Wisdom dwells with prudence, the reflective judgment, which the fear of God calls for and produces as seeking always His will, giving a discernment which judges of the true character of everything. It is subtle, dwells with it, is found where this is. It is strange to put ■■■■■■■ and ■■■■■■■■ together; but it is just what divine wisdom does. In the witty inventions it is the cogitations of the heart which find out these witty inventions. When fully developed in us, we read, “The spiritual man discerneth all things, and he himself is discerned of no man.” He judges all around him, and whatever he has to walk in; but his motives, principles, and aims the natural man discerns not; his path baffles the cleverness of him who has not the Spirit. See Rabshakeh's interview with the servants of Hezekiah. He is sure of his way, or motives, and principles: unknown to the unspiritual man, his way is a riddle to him. The result proves its wisdom to the world. His ■■■■■■■■ are beyond the ken of the natural man. This leads to the great principle and spring of it—the beginning of wisdom, the fear of the Lord—the bringing of God in so that His thoughts, not our will, have authority over us. Where that is, we hate wrong, the exercise of will, and selfishness, contrary to the relationships in which we stand. All self-will, and setting up of self, the evil way and perverse words, wisdom hates. But if the beat and pretension of will is hated of wisdom, with it is counsel—the wisdom of a staid reflective mind, subject and looking to the Lord and the resources of sound judgment in difficulty, discernment and strength. Compare Eccl. 9:13-18, where mere physical strength is contrasted, and the way wisdom affords security is spoken of.

We now come to its direct earthly aspect in connection with God's government of the earth. Government, righteous judgment, the rule of the great depends on it. Thus we read of the wisdom of Solomon. They have to represent God in the discernment of good and evil and the maintenance of right by authority on the earth; this they can do only by divine wisdom.

But then there is another point applying to all hearts loving it for its own sake, and diligence of heart in seeking it. Real delight in God's wisdom in itself, and the sense of obligation to realize it. “I love them that love me; and they that seek me early shall find me.” Wisdom is loved for its own sake, and diligence of heart seeks it as a duty incumbent on us. But in the earthly government of

God it brings its reward. This was fully the ground the law went upon. The God-fearing obedient man was to be blessed in his basket and blessed in his store. But there is more than this—riches that do not perish and righteousness that the heart delights in as its treasure. Wisdom walks in the path of righteousness, discerns by the action of the conscience and the word how men are to walk and to please God. It discerns what is right in all the complicated scene of this world, gives a sure path in it according to God. Seeking only to please Him; it gives motives above the circumstance and thus a path through them. We do what is right in them. We walk in firmness and a plain path where the circumstances would afford none. This is a great comfort. We are not careful to answer in the matter. Divine wisdom is in the fear of the Lord and uprightness. There is light, divine light, on the path, where all is dark around, for divine wisdom knows its path here by righteousness. This is its path. That is a light on the path. We cannot do otherwise, though it may seem folly and trial even accompany it. It is God's way, and that turns out right even in this world, though it may at the time seem a sacrifice of everything and bring trouble upon us. So Joseph; but it led him here below under God's overruling hand to a place which, humanly speaking, he would not otherwise have had. This was not his motive. He did what was right and would not do what was wrong, and it brought him from a captive slave to be lord of Egypt.

I know Christians have much higher objects in hope and are called by them; but here we are on the ground of God's government of the earth, and that government is carried on now though not in the direct way it once was in Israel—a people of His own. Nor does wisdom ever get out of these paths. She is found only in the paths of judgment. In all cases and circumstances in which man has to walk, a way cast up in righteousness is the only one wisdom can walk in. She is always found in the midst of them (that is, cannot be out of the paths so formed and marked out). These are God's, these are wisdom. And where God's government is exercised in this world and for it, as wisdom's place, such a path issues in blessing and prosperity. Suffering in a hostile world may be more specifically our portion now, though from Abel down it was there. Still there is such a government of which God has not let loose the reins. “He that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him eschew evil and do good, let him seek peace and ensue it: for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous,” &c. It is not only in Job's time that it was true, that “he withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.” This is government and the path of wisdom, an interesting point. But now the Spirit of God comes to counsels and purpose.

Wisdom has brought light into this world of confusion, divine light, but existed before the world was in the thoughts and counsels of God, Christ being the center of all these counsels, and the object of God's delight. He is the wisdom of God, as the power of God when He works. His works were the scene of wisdom and the wisdom was eternal—was there before the works and power displayed in the works, but with a fuller counsel yet. There is a path which God treads, so to speak—a path unfolding what is the fruit of His thoughts; but that path is not mere power without a plan and counsel; nor is He dealing wisely with what He finds, as we have to do. Wisdom is precious in that, but then it is in subjection, and a righteousness which is true wisdom, but which is obligatory on us—we have to find wisdom's path where we are, by doing right, for we owe that to God. But God possessed it in the beginning of His way. The point is not here, that there was wisdom displayed in creation, no doubt there was; but the point is, that before the world existed, wisdom had its place with God. We have to find the path of it in creation, now ruined; but God's

mind and thought was before it all. This is what is brought out from verse 22 to the end of verse 29. No doubt wisdom was displayed when He prepared the heavens and put a compass on the face of the deep; but before all wisdom was there. It was there when He did it; but itself was from eternity. The earth was an occasion for its display—a work adapted by wisdom to the divine glory and the ends of that wisdom; but it was wisdom, it was itself, before it found a sphere for its display, and creation was its fruit, but not its object. It was itself, had its place with God, and its object on which its purpose rested. The first statement as to this is, that Jehovah possessed this wisdom already when His way began the movement to produce anything outside Himself—to reveal Himself. In the beginning of His way, before His works, wisdom was inaugurated, established as the authority and order on which, being in the mind of God, all was to be ordered and established; but, secondly, was there in the secret time of eternity. It is in fact summed up in John 1 concerning the Word.

Jehovah possessed this wisdom (it was the outset of all things) before the earth—in which His ways have been unfolded—existed. It was produced from Jehovah, brought forth as the fruit of His being in itself before creation—what was outside Himself—existed. And not only this earth, but when He prepared the heavens, wisdom was there. All this marks this wisdom as the produce and mind of Jehovah in itself and in Himself before mere creation (which existed from His fiat and word) had begun to exist. It is divine and in Godhead, as creation exists by His word outside Himself. No doubt it is spoken of mystically here; but Christ is it, and its revealed fullness and manifestation. He who is this was in the Father before the world was, before anything existed but what was in Godhead itself. He was God, but, as thus looked at, as subsisting, He was with God, and all things by Him, as the whole scene of the wisdom of the divine mind. But there was more than this. Wisdom was, objectively, the delight of the divine mind. The thoughts it produced were perfect, necessarily as itself, and the delight of the mind that produced them. They answered to it. We do so with our petty minds, and yet ours answer often imperfectly even to our small minds, and all is partial. Divine wisdom was according to divine fullness and perfection, and expressed it as a whole, and was the divine delight. Christ was all this in His person; but here it was taken up abstractedly. It was always with God, by Him, in immediate intimacy of nature and fellowship; One brought up in love by Him; His delight day by day. It is a wonderful description.

But not only was divine delight in this wisdom here fully looked at as a person, but it too (or perhaps we should now say) He was ever rejoicing before God at all times. This object of God's delight was rejoicing itself before Him; so, subordinately and by grace, we are holy and without blame before Him in love. But here it was an eternal and divine object—what was in Godhead itself, yet with God objectively. Jehovah possessed wisdom as His delight before anything out of Himself was formed; and this wisdom was One rejoicing before Him. But there was a purpose that occupied wisdom before the sphere and scene in which the object of that purpose was to be developed existed. Wisdom rejoiced in the habitable parts of God's earth, and its delight was with the sons of men. How wondrously does this come in! Though surely a wise God ordered the creation, yet wisdom was set on other things—man was the object in view. That wisdom, whose joy was before God and who was the delight and joy of God, was not delighting in the earth, but in the habitable parts of it. There was purpose. A poor trivial part of creation, if merely of creation—if we look at the vastness of the scene in which he moves, but the center of all God's purposes—the object of His thought before creation—complete in purpose, in whom, according to the purpose of

that wisdom, was to be set up the whole display of it. The habitable parts of God's earth wisdom delighted in, and its delight was in the sons of men. Man was first created a responsible being, but, as a being, God's delight, the center of His ways here below, made in His image, after His likeness, and the image withal of Him that was to come. But this (though God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that he was His offspring) yet was a responsible man as a creature, and as a creature failed. But after many exercises and preparatory dealings of wisdom, He who was the wisdom of God and His power, by whom all things were created, became Himself a man. Life was in Him, and the life was the light of men—in its very nature was such. The angels could then, in unjealous and holy strains, declare that God's good pleasure was in man. A wondrous and blessed thought! He who had this place with the Father was made flesh—God's delight down here, God manifest in flesh: grace to man, grace in man, man taken into union with God in one Person—the pledge of peace on earth, “Glory to God in the highest.” But as yet, as to its effect on others, it was connected with the responsibility of those around Him— “He was despised and rejected of men.” This unspeakable favor and blessing (for the creature's mind was still in question) was rejected and cast away. But now wisdom's purpose could come out, and founded on that perfect work which He accomplished, through this very wickedness to make it more complete and ■clatant on that which glorified God Himself; the purpose established before the world was is revealed in glorified man, yet righteously in obedient man, and in One who had glorified God in all that He was, in that in which He who did so was made sin for us. He met all the requirements of God—all the responsibility of those who came to God by Him, bearing their sins; He manifested the righteous ground of grace addressed to all, and glorified God so as to bring many sons—man—into glory, God's glory.

Now came out the manifold wisdom of God by the Church, displayed even to principalities and powers in heavenly places, in the union of man with the very center of glory, heirs in that of all which was to be placed under His hands as man. The proper purpose was our own place in and united to Him and with Him, but this involved the dominion which belonged to Him as man. (See Titus 1:1, 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3-5 and following, and 1 Cor. 2:6-8.) All the responsibility of the first man met, for those who believe; and as to God's glory, absolutely and completely, and the foundation for the accomplishment of God's purpose in righteousness, according to the full glory of that purpose: grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Responsible man came in between the purpose and its accomplishment, failed as such, and then in the perfect man, the Son of God, grace finds its free display in righteousness and the purpose accomplished in glory. When we know Christ we know the meaning of that; His delights were in the sons of men. Wondrous thought! but how true, how simple to us, when we see the eternal Word and Wisdom a man! How sweet, for we are men! How wondrous, to see glory in righteousness with Him, when grace has reigned through it, when God has been glorified and glorified our Head with Himself; and we soon to have the rest with Him according to the same righteousness! “For he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.”

It is because God's delight is in the sons of men that wisdom now calls them to hear; and though her ways seem strange to the pride and pretension of man, boasting of righteousness because ignorant of God, yet wisdom is justified of all her children in the solemn call to repentance on responsibility, and the blessed announcement of grace in goodness, both the proofs of mercy, of God's interest in man; and, indeed, all God's nature and ways, all His being, is displayed in

redemption and grace. Love, mercy, holiness, judgment, righteousness, patience, intolerance of evil, majesty, and tender condescension in grace; the coming in of evil, its extent, and the surmounting it in grace, and yet through righteousness, such as naught else could have done—all is brought out in the work of Christ and by its effect in the heart of man, so that in him it should be all displayed, yet all be sovereign grace to him; for the Son of God being a man in glory and having died tells a tale nothing else could tell—divine glory, and death as made sin, yet death overcome in resurrection, death to deliver us, death where all was perfectness for God and in man, and by which God could display all He was. Christ gave Himself up for that, and is in the glory.

Therefore wisdom calls on us to listen to her, for it is grace: it is because God delights in us. Blessed are those who keep the ways of wisdom. It is the activity of God's goodness calling to that only path which leads to rest and the peaceful favor of God; and I recall here the distinct principle of this chapter. It is not the warnings of natural authority, the ordained channel of wisdom in a relationship formed by God. It is the direct call of wisdom, the call in grace of the divine word itself to man as such, because His delight is in them, as in the ministry of John Baptist and Christ, above the natural relationship, and directly from God to the consciences and hearts of men, bringing about purpose; but in the righteous gracious summons of God. It is wonderful—this direct appeal in grace. It may rudely break in upon the natural relationships and set five in one house, three against two and two against three, because it is direct and individual from God Himself and brings about purpose in result. Hence, though peace on earth even was to be the result in purpose, yet in present operation Christ could say, “Think ye that I am come to send peace on earth?” And hence He was straitened till the baptism in which He glorified God was accomplished, because the unbelief of man drove back into the recesses of His heart the love, which, when the work of glorifying God in righteousness was accomplished, could flow freshly forth. Then the ground for the accomplishment of purpose according to glory was fully laid, and Christ enters in resurrection into the fruit of righteousness in glory; and, when all is accomplished, will raise us up at the last day, responsibility being fully met, yea God glorified, in that which did it.

When wisdom came addressing itself to responsibility, it had only to complain. “Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?” But the truth was, the Son was too perfect, too glorious to be discerned by man. “God hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes” —blessed those who (in this gracious appeal to children, which puts God in grace, where nature stood in authority on His part—not my children indeed, but “children,” sons, interested in them in that character) keep wisdom's ways, hear instruction and refuse it not. The first we have in the sermon on the mount, keeping wisdom's ways; the second in Mary at Jesus' feet, and in principle in those who knew that the words of eternal life were to be found nowhere else. “For whose findeth her, findeth life and Jehovah's favor.” But there is more than pressing men to hear and keep the instruction of wisdom (compare Luke 11:28; Matt. 13:23); there is earnestness of heart on our part, waiting upon it, watching daily at her gates and waiting at the posts of her doors. It is not mental effort, the production of the human mind, but waiting on divine teaching as Mary did, “as new born babes desiring the sincere milk of the word.” It is not here the proclamation of wisdom, but the desires of the heart towards it thus manifested. Here life is found, for it is the word of life, and that man finds the favor of Jehovah: the double aspect of divine blessing in us, life, divine life, and divine favor resting upon us. He that sins against it injures his own soul. There is a path in which will walks to its own ruin. It is not God's path. Our own will

hates the path of divine will, which is for us a subject path, but that ends in death. It is not the causes in grace which deliver which are spoken of, but the fact of what is found in result. As the apostle teaches us in Romans, he that by patient continuance in well doing seeks for glory, honor, and incorruptibility, eternal life, was to favor. “If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him.” “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.” It was no question whether Christ surely had life. He was life. But that was the path in which He walked in divine favor. It is not here grace saving sinners and giving them glory, but the path (including the state of the heart) in this world, in which life and favor are found. God bringing in testimony in grace of what He is pleased in, and wisdom showing us how we are to walk and to please God. It is for us what we have heard of the word of life. We live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

We have seen the wondrous revelation of the purpose of God in man, but we must remember that here earth is dealt with when we come to details. The principle is always true in every testimony of the Lord now or then. The immediate connection here is the earth, because there this testimony came, there it found responsible man. Its most direct and evident application is in the person of the Lord Jesus on earth. Only like the parable of the sower, or John the Baptist even, it is always true when the cry of wisdom or wisdom itself is gone forth. John was transitional and pointed to another; that other was wisdom's self, and John (Matt. 11) had to come in on His cry. Still the children of wisdom justified God's wisdom in him. The law and the prophets were till John. He led into wisdom's paths, going before the face of the Lord.

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Chapter 195

A Few Words on the Punishment of Sin

Can a sinner atone for his sins, either in this life or in the next?

“Without shedding of blood is no remission.” (Heb. 9:22.) “For it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.” (Lev. 17:11.)

Our sins and iniquities have separated us from God. (See Isa. 59:2.) How can they be put away? Can any amount of working or suffering on our part blot them out? No must be the answer of all who know anything of God as taught of the Spirit. The death of Christ atones for the sinner: “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” (1 Cor. 15:3.) Christ alone could meet God's claim on the sinner on account of his sins, and that only by dying in his stead. His blood was shed. What a sacrifice! How great the debt to need such payment! The life of the Son of. God, His only Son, His beloved Son in whom He was well-pleased.

But what is taught by the doctrine of the non-eternity of punishment? Why, simply this: That a few years (more or less, as the case may require) of suffering in hell will meet the claim of God on account of the sinner and his sins! The teachers of this non-eternity doctrine acknowledge that the sinner does suffer. But why? I ask; unless it be to meet God's claim. Why is he found in hell? Why in suffering? They say, he must burn out. But do his sins burn out? are they atoned for? If not, be and they are still joined, for they are not put away. And can any one believe that the sinner, by suffering in the place where he deserves to be on account of sin, does make atonement? We have already seen in scripture that the sacrifice needed was none other than the Lamb of God. What can be their estimate of Him and of His atoning work on the cross, who can attribute a like result to the sinner's torment? But if the sinner in hell, by suffering, meets the claims of a righteous God against him, does not justice demand that he should be reinstated in the condition of man before the fall? When Christ met the claims of God, and satisfied Him fully on account of our sins, God raised Him from the dead; whereas the sinner, after having suffered for his own sins to God's satisfaction, is to be obliterated, say they.

It is a question of man's sins which make him a sinner; without them he would be fit for enjoying the blessing of God, as was Adam before the fall. But sin came in, and death by sin. Again I ask, How can these sins be atoned for? how can all the righteous claims of God be met in the case of any one sinner? Christ, indeed, on the cross has fully satisfied God; and those who believe now see in Him the One who became their ransom, who has paid their debt to the uttermost. But the unbeliever is found in hell; and is not hell the prison where those go whose debt has not been paid by Christ? Let us be simple. Have any of us doubted this? 'What says the scripture? “Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence until thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.” Can be do it? Can he work it out? Can he suffer it out? From whence does the sinner get life beyond the grave if his soul be not immortal? From God, they say. What, I ask, is this life then given for? Their doctrine gives but one answer—That the sinner may settle the account standing against him by suffering for a time. What else is this than atonement? Where in scripture will you find an atoning work for the sinner beside the atoning work of Christ, of which Old Testament

sacrifices were the type? Will any one contend for such a doctrine as this? Alas! yes. Satan would. make man think little of his sins, and still less of Christ's atonement for sin.

“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” (Heb. 9:22.) Let the servant of God warn the sinner that in hell there is no ransom, no sacrifice, no shedding of blood, no putting away of sin, none there to pay his debt, none then to help. He and his sins remain joined: they are his; they belong to him: Who can separate them? “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” S. P.

Chapter 196

Purged With Blood

“AND almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

In the latter part of this text we find an exclusive and distinct proposition—that without shedding of blood there is no remission.

In the flaming sword placed in the garden of Eden, after man's disobedience, we find his positive exclusion from the presence of God; in our being out of Paradise, we see the existing fact, that we are in a state of exclusion from God. And the question now is, have we any access to God—to that which is far above Paradise?

It is not only that we are out of Paradise, but that we stand in all the accumulation of our transgressions. In the first act of sin we find that the will of man is disobedience to God; and every act of his since has been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

When our conscience is awakened we learn how productive of fruit our evil nature is, and whenever we see that all is gone (for innocency once lost is lost forever) then we find there is no competency in us to enter into association with God; that which was man's privilege in Paradise has been lost, and we find ourselves not only evil, but daily accumulating transgressions. And can we then enter into the place of God's holiness? This is the only true question. Let me ask you—Is there nothing your consciences own as needing remission? Murder, and theft, &c., which are the consequences of the condition man is in, through transgression, are owned by all as evil. The natural man may see the blessing of moral conduct as giving happiness on earth, but can discern nothing beyond. But when we look within the veil, it is altogether another thing. Our not wronging our neighbor may produce temporal happiness; but the revelation of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ awakens the mind to a new inquiry—its fitness for the presence of such holiness; and this question is soon settled: we find this utterly impossible. It is not fitting us for happiness in this world as it is (that is not the question); but making us competent to be associated with Christ in the glory He is in when He appears. Does the world know anything of this? Is this what they look for? Do they not rather say it is presumption to think any can have association and fellowship with God? The world is a witness to itself that it presumes no such thing.

God's testimony is, “There are none righteous, none understand, and none seek after God.” But suppose we have received an understanding to know Him that is true, then still the question is—How are we to stand in the presence of the glory? Can one in a sinful condition abide in His presence? Can we say we are fit to be partakers of the glory? There is nothing in the world fit for this. It is vain to plead the highest morality, or the most refined amiability; they are not the things to qualify us for heaven. We may find the character of evil all around: all are guilty, for all come short of the glory of God. The evil or the root from which it springs may be easily discerned in the fruits.

Now there must not only be a renewing, but a complete purging of the conscience. And I plead this, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission; all other ways are the efforts of man

to depreciate the righteousness of God—the substitution of something instead of God's way of salvation, which is most presumptuous and subversive of the great testimony of God, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. The accumulated sin of our evil nature must be put away. The Spirit of God can have no part but bringing us to the knowledge of the hatefulness of sin, and the necessity of the blood shed; and whenever the soul is awakened to what sin is in God's sight, there cannot be peace until the Spirit which shows the necessity of holiness, and reveals that of God, thus teaches us that nothing but God's own efficient act can put away, by the shedding of the blood of Jesus, that which God testifies against.

The shedding the blood brings it to the actual power of death—the taking away of the life of him whose life is given; and why? Because there is the forfeiture of life, and therefore the necessity of the life being given, the blood shed, to blot out the sin; and here we find Christ stepping in, and all the believer has entirely shut up in Christ, in whom we have a new nature in which we can delight in God, and not forgiveness only; and this the consequence of the work of Christ alone, shedding His blood before God, offering His life as a ransom to God, presenting that which was adequate for the purpose, but without which there is no escaping the consequences of sin. “It pleased the Lord to bruise him.” The blood was shed, but it is manifested as His own voluntary act. At the same time His side is pierced that we might know the act complete. This is presented to our faith as a thing requisite, and which could be done in no other way. Christ had no associate, no companion; but once alone and forever the thing was done; and the revelation of it by God to the soul is salvation. This is a transaction between God and the Son; the thing done is the remission of sins to every one who believes.

I have not peace in anything in which I take a part, but peace in that in which Christ acted alone. Man's part in it was only stretching out the sinful hands which crucified Him, and that is all he had to do with it. Is it, I ask, by any act to be done now that peace is obtained? No; it is simply by the blood which has been shed, the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of His death, which can give peace through faith.

If once we see ourselves morally dead in trespasses and sins, and that without the full forfeit of life there is no remission, we shall see, as regards the cleansing of the conscience, there is nothing but the blood for us. But who did this? It is the act of God to provide Himself a Lamb, by the shedding of whose blood the conscience of those admitted into the holy presence of God is effectually purged.

Can you say Paradise is lost, and disobedience and sin are here, and yet I shall force my way back to God? What hope can those have who are not washed in the blood, taking a worse ground than that which excluded them from Paradise (with thus accumulated sin upon them), treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and despising that blood which cleanses from all sin, counting it an unholy thing? He who seeks God's holiness and passes by Jesus, going to God in his sins, passes by the blood, rejects the testimony of God, and despises Jesus.

Chapter 197

The Relative and the Absolute

I HAVE largely sought to show elsewhere that knowledge is relative; i. e., necessarily according to the form and measure of being which knows. I am so constituted as to conclude certain things; and they are true to me. I meet a closed door, and am such that I say, matter exists, and is extended, &c.; and two cannot be in the same place at once; and it is true for me. But a spiritual body could pass through a closed door. This, however, is not my manner of existence, nor consequently of knowledge. I cannot know what is true for spiritual bodies because it is not my mode of existence.

But when Mr. Mansel accepts Hegel's dictum that the Absolute must include all that is actual, even evil, I deny it. It is all a confusion of terms. What is relative or moral is confounded with essential attributes. I do not say with Augustine, that evil is a negation; but I do say it is failure or inconsistency with a relationship in which anything is, and supremely with God; and hence it cannot be connected with Absolute because this is the opposite of failure in the relationship. In a creature there is nothing absolute, and the only right thing is dependence and obedience. If I cease either, I get out of relationship to the Absolute, and yet I cannot be the Absolute. I am only false to what ought to be my relationship to it. Absolute is the truth of everything; but in all but the Absolute, in the nature of things, there is only dependence on it; and if not this, there is not truth (i. e., there is the opposite of the Absolute, and this cannot be in the Absolute). Satan was a liar from the beginning and abode not in the truth, for there was no truth in him. Dependence in nature, in independence of will, is not in the truth; but that, in the nature of things, cannot be in the Absolute.

Mr. Mansel's pretended analogous syllogism is false in every way. A circular parallelogram is a contradiction in terms and within the scope of human knowledge; it cannot exist. The Absolute can exist. Hence there is no comparison. The contradiction in terms is in saying evil can be in the Absolute, because evil is falseness to relationship, and this is, by the very idea of the Absolute, a contradiction. The whole in Hegel and Mansel is a want of moral discernment. Power is in the Absolute, as is the truth of everything. Hence power (i. e., independent power) out of the Absolute cannot exist—is a lie if it be set up. But a lie cannot exist in the Absolute, because all in it is in the truth of it, for it exists; and what is pretended to and is evil, because it exists only in the Absolute, does exist in truth in the Absolute, and therefore it is not evil.

There is another point. It is a mistake to suppose that I cannot be certain of the necessity of the existence of that of which I cannot conceive as existing. For my form of existence obliges me to recognize the existence of that which is out of the form of my existence, and which I consequently cannot conceive. If I have a relative existence, it is in relation to an absolute; for, in result, relation supposes this; but, because it is relative, I cannot conceive it. Thus in a particular instance, argued on elsewhere, I am so constituted as to see that there cannot be a thing existing stamped by design without a designer. In a word, I am so constituted that I believe in causes—hence in a first cause. I feel that for what is there must be a cause. But this is just what is false as to a first cause. I am so formed as to have the sense of cause and effect, because I exist as an effect. This is my

relationship. Hence I have no idea of what an existence is which has no relationship to a cause, because, in my nature and necessary form of thought, I exist in such relationship; yet this very relationship forces me to see and own there is. Hence I have an idea of the Absolute, but not of how it subsists. But if I set up to be without the Absolute (i. e., not in relation to a cause), or to be absolute, it is evil—false. But this evil is not therefore in the Absolute, because that existence, in Him is truth, not false; the evil does not, cannot, exist in Him; for the Absolute is, in the nature of things, absolute truth. That is, each thing in Him is the truth—is what it is in its true nature, or is not the thing. All that Hegel and Mansel say is from the want of perceiving what Absolute and evil mean.

But I do think, in spite of all that has been said, that in Christ we have a revelation of the Absolute, not in itself (for a revelation seems to me to deny this in its nature, for it is not being, but the revelation of being); but still that which is is revealed. Hence He is the truth. But He is, and so manifests Him who is; He emptied (■κ■νωσε) Himself to do it. Now reason has nothing to do with the truth, because it has only ideas in the mind; and they must exist in the mind. It can only conclude what must be, never what is. This is in its very nature the nature and value of reasoning, such as it is; but truth is the declaration of what is. It is not what is, nor is it a conclusion of what must be, which is only a result in my mind; but it is the declaration of what is.

Hence no theology is the truth. But Christ is the declaration of what is; He declares what God is. He that has seen Him has seen the Father. “I have manifested thy name.” He is not as truth the Absolute in itself; but He is the Absolute in Himself. All the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him. Hence, as revealing it through a medium, as a concrete person down here, He is not the Absolute; but as the Absolute is in Him, and He makes Himself nothing (He is, as man, a mere servant), the Absolute is perfectly revealed. And so even as to man; because man being in Him an absolute and perfect servant, yet perfect in service, we have the truth of man. As to evil, it was revealed as to both its weakness and its power in man and Satan by its relationship to Him and God in Him: so this was the truth.

What is the Absolute? Self-existence, love, purity. I do not think there is more. If I have a feeling that is not love, I am acted on by something (i. e., something is above me). I am not independent; but divine love is not moved by what is lovely (though God may delight in it when it is). And purity (figuratively light) means that there is nothing inconsistent with perfect existence—independence of all that could be or make inconsistency with love. If corruption were there, something has acted on self-being to make it what it was not when incorrupt. This is not hidden by anything and shows what everything is, and hence is justly called by the image-name of light.

I do not call power the Absolute (though God be Almighty); for its action supposes will; that is, it is not what is in its nature. The Absolute can be preceded by nothing, but is itself: love is itself; light is itself. Power is wielded by—it is what the Self-being (■ ■ν) has, not what He is. God, though all-wise, is not wisdom more than power, and for the same reason. I do not call righteousness or holiness the Absolute. They are the relation of power and nature to something else. Hence the written word, which is the truth, calls God “God,” “love,” “light;” not power, nor righteousness, nor holiness. Power and wisdom belong to Him: He is righteous and holy. But these are relative, particularly the two last—hence not what is, though they characterize.

But then man has no apprehension at all of love and light by reasoning; he may have in effect of power and righteousness by seeing the effects. God reveals Himself, and makes us partakers of the divine nature, by which we understand it, It is not as if we were it; for, as men, we must be nothing (as Christ made Himself) to be in the truth and know God. For if we are something in ourselves, we deny the one Self being and our relationship to Him. In the degree in which we are nothing by the revelation of God and the enjoyment of Him in the divine nature, so far we know the Absolute. But God has outwardly, that we may be nothing, revealed His love and acted in it when we were nothing—independent in will without self-being, and hence haters of God. This was fully brought out in the cross where we had only sin, and thus it was pure and supreme love in God; and hence death of the old man that hates is brought in, by which it is nothing; and then the willing nothingness of the new man (we are servants) in which we enjoy the Absolute, God, and serve, which is love –the proof downwards that we are partakers of the divine nature. In the temptation in the wilderness the enemy sought to take the blessed One out of the place of God being all and Himself the servant. Mysticism (and self-scrutiny as often preached) has a right principle; but from ignorance of there being no good in us, and that it is by positive action of love and light towards us that we are made nothing of, and that God in love and light is all, it goes all astray and sets up the self it would have done with. It is by the foolishness of the cross and of preaching, by divine love wholly outside us, and our salvation accomplished wholly outside us, and grace so manifested, our sins so purged by a work of God in Christ and dealing with Him, that self is made nothing of. We never know we are nothing, nor are glad to be it, till we know we are worse than nothing.

But no Hegelian or Fichtean spreading out of individuality into the race, or a kind of absolute of humanity, can do this; because after all self makes a part of the whole, though largely volatilized. It is not the denial of self, because I go to make up a part of the idea—that is, self does. But God is outside myself, and I as a Christian am absolutely delivered from it. Christianity seems to me in this divinely wise; and the more simply it is received, the more we have its wisdom, because self is thus done with and God glorified. On the other hand, it is true that we must be born of God. If I am not partaker of the divine nature, I cannot know it. I am light, and I love in my new nature in the Lord and in the power of the Holy Ghost, or I could not know God who is such. It is not knowing myself, because 1 am no self-being, but a partaker of this nature; but being so, I am capable of knowing the Absolute, morally, though not as a self-being. And thus I am in the truth, because this dependence is my true relationship. A holy loving nature delights in God being what we are not—in His being above us: if not, self would not be destroyed, we should be evil and not the Absolute.

“Cogito; ergo sum” does not seem to me unambiguously true. If I say, I think or feel, and therefore there must be an I (i.e., I must exist), it is true. But “I am” is something more; it means properly self-being. Now, I apprehend, self-being does not think; it knows. Thinking implies ignorance, imperfection, drawing conclusions (which is the opposite of knowing). “I am” is the necessary source of all—hence must know all. “I know” expresses the order in necessary precedence of things (perhaps this led to Plato's idea). “I think” is therefore not I am, but I exist.

I do not admit that, if I could judge of the attributes of God by my mind, I do not need a revelation; because acts may be needed for my reconciliation, both as to guilt and moral condition, and the exercise of grace which I may require to know to make them available. I may need, in order to the attribute being exercised, to know them from Himself. The only other supposition is that I so know what God is that I can conclude absolutely to what He will do, so as to be able to announce all He

must do. But this would not reveal that it was done. It would be only a mental deduction. Nor would this be possible, because it supposes that I am as perfect as God, or I could not judge, as He, what to do. Besides, His doing may be in connection with some constitution of the Godhead which is not an attribute at all, but a fact known only by revelation. Note, as such, action of God must be in time for us, because we are in time. There is the question of its being done; and if God is love, He will show it at some time and in some way suited to the object. If I am a sinner (and who will be mad enough to say that this world or his own heart is in its normal state? All know they are not), the whole thing is absurd, because it disables me from knowing intellectually, and the exercise of attributes must be of a special kind toward such, which a perfect man could not even conceive—he could not even understand the want. The sinner confessedly would be alike incapable of knowing; and his supposing himself an object of it would prove him unfit for it and insensible to it. In every point of view the supposition that a knowledge of attributes (if it existed) would preclude a revelation is wholly false. If God be love, the knowledge of this would make His own expression of it (i.e., a revelation) a part of the display of that attribute and a necessary one.

It is a great blunder to think that our knowledge of qualities is all that constitutes religion or even the basis of human affection. All this reasoning I deny. Besides, attributes are not known by man so as to form a religious basis. If they are, show the example before Judaism or Christianity. The theology of Kant is as bad as the religion of the devil, or worse—it has not a divine affection in it.

For two and indeed three reasons, I do not think much of the argument from qualities in us to the attributes of God. For if I say I feel goodness is a good thing, and it must be infinite in God, it is really an innate consciousness of God, of which I suppose the seed is in every one; and I should not say much against it. God must be perfect; I feel this is good, and it must be infinitely in Him. But there is a combination of qualities—goodness, justice, holiness, power. In man, say goodness, justice, Now in finite and imperfect man I understand this, though they may be at the expense of each other. But when I make them infinite, they really exclude each other logically. I do not know how to combine them; and my infinite perfection of a quality in me becomes absurd. First, because we must look for combination; and this in infinitude I am incapable of. I doubt very much that there is any combination of qualities in God. Each act is right relatively to Himself and displays Himself; but we must speak of them so. Next, according to my powers what is infinite excludes all else. Thirdly, when a being is superior the qualities of attributes are completely changed. I believe the cross has taught me the perfect reconciliation of these attributes in infinitude; and now I have the way, it confirms me in the conviction that they could not be in God Himself simply as such. “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.”

The reasoning which speaks of the Absolute comprehending all is to me mere confusion, because it takes physical and moral infinitude as identical, as if being and qualities were the same. The Absolute, if I connect it with physical existence, becomes simple pantheism, because being or existence must be absolute. And all these things have a side of truth. But qualities are not beings. In particular, evil cannot be infinite, because it is relative and supposes something pre-existing as to which it is evil.

Further, all the reasoning as to forgiveness by God, simply because we can, is stupid confusion. I admire one that forgives, because he gives up self. And in this sense God may be said to forgive freely, though it is not quite exact. But when one forgives in the sense of wrong or disorder (not to

self, but) either to others or to common moral order, there is a giving up not of self but of good. It is either indifference to evil, a giving up of all public moral order, or saying that there is no moral government nor ought to be. And so we judge in human things. A judge or a law that forgave all crimes would be nonsense; nor would men admire it at all even if selfishness were not concerned. If there ought to be no moral government testifying to the difference of good and evil, right and wrong, yet the beauty of forgiving personal wrongs has nothing to do with it, proves nothing about it, is sophistical clap-trap. They have to prove, not that it is beautiful for man to forgive as giving up self, but that there ought to be no moral government, which is quite another question.

“Sustaining modes of being” is, I apprehend, very confused and loose language. Is it a mode or a being which is contained? What contains them? What is a mode of being? or can there be modes of being in the Absolute? I should deny it. Absolute is really an abstract conception, not a being at all. A being is itself, and cannot have or contain modes: absolute, it has its own. When men speak of an absolute being, they do not think of a personal being. Supposing an absolute personal being to create, does the being cease to be absolute because a creature exists and is in relation to it? Yet it cannot have a creature mode of being, for it is absolute. Absolute (unless it is a mere abstraction, i.e., nothing) supposes nothing before it on which it depends, but does not suppose nothing after it and dependent on it—does not hinder its being infinite, unless we confound ideal with physical infinitude. But its being absolute precludes its containing a mode of being which is not absolute. The Absolute supposes not only a possible but an actual existence out of all relation; but it does not suppose that it ceases in se to be absolute because it becomes a cause. A cause cannot as such be absolute: the terms have no correlative. But a Being who is absolute does not cease to be so by being a cause, by willing. That is there is no contradiction.

So when it is said, If infinite, it cannot become (i.e., a cause), this is merely a loose employment of the word “become.” It becomes nothing in se by being a cause; it remains absolutely the same. Something is produced outside itself by its will. If infinitude meant material extended, then indeed it would be impossible. It will be said that it acts, while before it was quiescent. It does not change but displays itself. Display of self is not change, or self is not displayed. Had it been always displayed, it would be in a limited, not absolute, state. If creation was always, then it was not creation, or display had a necessary relation. Will was part of the absolute. It displays will in creating and in not always creating. Had it always created, it would not have been a display of self in this respect. It was absolute and sufficient in itself: this was displayed by only creating when it pleased. By creating it displays that it was not necessarily quiescent (i.e., dependent on something, not absolute).

Thus the difficulty (i.e., if it be good to create and will was to be a cause, must it; not have been always?) is only introducing time into the thought of the Infinite and Absolute. It is a confusion of thought; and this does prove that I cannot conceive how the absolute exists—though I know it does—because I exist not absolutely.

There is no necessary relation in causing: indeed the idea of causing denies it (though I am aware there are those who hold a law of order and no being, but this is not properly a cause). When there is an I—a Being—who causes, there is no necessary relationship but the contrary; in the caused being there is. If it can be said, I am, I create, I destroy, there is absoluteness and no necessary relation. Aristotles, and Origens, and Fichtes may deny it, because they introduce time (i.e., my

mode of being, into God's) to get an idea of how. But if this confusion be avoided, and it is only confusion, creation and absoluteness are not contradictory. The idea of eternal matter is not really possible to us if we reflect; because we, being caused, are so constituted as to feel the need of a cause for existence, forcing us to infer there must be a self-existent Being, but making it impossible to conceive that mode of existence. Pantheism reduces existence to matter, and so denies absoluteness and unchangeableness.

I admit creation is an object of faith, not of knowledge; I can only know it when created. But it is no coming out of God as emanation, and going back. What I am in relation to God has formed according to the apprehensions of it He has created in me. There is no existence independent of Him, nor place where He is not sustainingly; but He does not exist in it. All these difficulties the simple words of scripture make as plain as possible: God created; but by Him all things consist. Their difficulties arose from making pure intellect God. Then you must have the intelligent and the intelligible (i e., ideal objects in the mind at least).

Chapter 198

Repentance and the Preaching of It

From Genesis to Revelation repentance is from time to time brought before us. At one period of the history it is spoken of God, at another it is urged on man. “The Lord repented that he had made man.” “He repented that He had made Saul king.” “He repented of the evil which he thought to do unto His people.” These and similar expressions, used of God in the Old Testament, are never found in reference to him in the new. Twice only in the New Testament is repentance spoken of about God, and both times to express the unchangeableness of what he has done. “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” (Rom. 11:29.) “The Lord sware and will not repent, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec.” (Heb. 7:21.) With man in the flesh before him in the Old Testament we can understand such a term used of God. Man's wickedness drew out the expression from the Spirit that God repented He had made him on the earth. His people's miseries, when suffering under his governmental dealings, drew forth the compassion of his heart, and He delivered them; “for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.” (Judg. 2:18.) With the second man, the Lord Jesus, before him in the new, and the fragrance of his merits ever fresh in his sight, no room was there for repentance on his part. The time of man's probation had ended; the day of dealing in grace had followed

Turning to man, repentance in both Old and New Testaments is enjoined on him. Job repented, and the Ninevites also. To Israel urgent but fruitless exhortations to repent were addressed by the prophet Ezekiel. as we open the New Testament we meet with that call repeated. John the Baptist preached it, and the Lord called men to it. The apostles before his crucifixion went out to insist on it, and after his ascension continued to enforce it. At all times after the fall, and under all dispensations, repentance on the part of fallen man was needful. Dispensational teaching does not do away with it; the fullest grace does not supersede it; for, side by side with the proclamation of forgiveness of sins, the Lord Jesus, when risen, commissioned his apostles to preach it. Thus Peter and Paul alike insist on the necessity of it, whilst the Lord Jesus had previously told of the joy which shall be in heaven, and the joy which is now experienced by the angels when one sinner repents and turns to God. A just person needs no repentance, a sinner does. Hence, in the New Testament, where we have principles set forth, and not the mere external acts, the term used of God's repentance is different from that employed when repentance is insisted on for sinners.

Forming then, as repentance does, so prominent a topic in the preaching of the apostles, it may well be a subject for inquiry, how far this element of apostolic preaching enters into the general evangelical teaching of the present day. Amid the now widely spread proclamation of God's grace to sinners, is not repentance sometimes overlooked is there not too with some a jealousy lest the preaching of it should detract from the freeness of that grace? Such clearly was not the case in apostolic times, nor should it be the case now. None contended more earnestly or constantly for the freeness and fullness of grace than Paul, yet none more plainly insisted on repentance. At Ephesus (Acts 20:21), at Athens (Chap. 17:30), and when writing to the Romans he spoke of it. (Rom. 2:4.) It was God's command to all men. At Damascus, at Jerusalem, in all Judea, and

wherever he went among the gentiles men could hear him insist on the importance and necessity of it. (Acts 26:20.) Repentance and faith he preached, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. It was not repentance as preparatory to faith, nor faith without repentance; but repentance and faith.

But some may ask, what is repentance? Let us turn to scripture to find out. It is not a mere change of mind on certain points (this will confound it with faith); but the Lord preached, “repent ye, and believe the gospel.” (Mark 1:15.) It is not simply a conviction of having done wrong; for, when the multitude were pricked to the heart, Peter exhorted them to repentance. (Acts 2:38.) It is not sorrow for sin, “for godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of.” (2 cor. 7:10.) Nor is it synonymous with conversion; for peter tells the Jews to “repent and be converted.” (Acts 3:19.) But it is a change of mind, a judgment of self, ways, and sins, which is evidenced by a change of life. it is God's gift (Acts 11:18 Tim. 2:25) bestowed by the risen and ascended Christ. (Acts 5:31.) It is fruitful; for there are works meet for (worthy of) repentance. (Matt. 3:8; acts 26:20.) It gives God his right place in the conscience of his creature, so it is “towards God” (Acts 20:21); and it is “unto life” and “salvation.” (Acts 11:18 Cor. 7:10.)

But how was this change of mind wrought in the individual? Not by preaching law. The law could show the sinner he had done wrong, but God alone could give repentance. Saints before the giving of the law experienced it, as well as gentiles who never were under it. Job saw God and repented; the Ninevites heard the preaching of Jonah about a coming judgment and repented. A judgment to come the apostles often announced. (Acts 3:23; 10:42; 17:31; 24:25.) The Roman saints heard of it (Rom. 1:18), and the Thessalonian believers had escaped it. (1 Thess. 1:10.) Peter wrote about it, and Jude quoted Enoch's prophecy concerning it. In view of the wrath to come the apostles urged on souls the importance of repentance. But to Israel there was an additional reason for their repentance, viz., that the times of refreshing should come by the return of the Lord Jesus from heaven. (Acts 3:19.)

Nor was it only in view of the future that they preached repentance. They exhorted their hearers to it on the ground of what had taken place. Man had crucified God's Son, and thereby showed his hatred to God. God had replied to man's act by raising up the crucified One, and setting him at his Own right hand in the heavens. By this it was plainly seen who it was that had been crucified, and as clearly demonstrated that all who opposed that crucified One, and persecuted those who followed Him, were really opposed to God. Here was a ground on which repentance might well be enjoined, and Peter insisted on it on the day of Pentecost. But how does he address his hearers? Does he speak of God's anger against the people, and dilate on the terribleness of his wrath, and urge them to propitiate the angry judge? He brings home to many of them the enormity of their guilt, by showing from scripture who the crucified one really was and is. He was the Christ, the hope of Israel. He was the Lord, the ruler of all. God's faithfulness to his promises had been vindicated in the sending of His Son, and this was the way they had treated their long-looked-for Messiah. Believing what he said, accepting the testimony of the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Peter, they saw what their sin was, and asked what they must do. So in Solomon's porch (chap. 3), and before the council, the apostles tell them plainly who it is they have crucified, and what God has done for him. They preached Christ, and God's acceptance of Him, witnessed by His resurrection and ascension. the person of the Lord set forth, their sin was manifested in all its enormity. They scrupled not to state it, and the conviction of it on the hearts of their audience necessitated

repentance. Paul, too, bore witness of a glorified Christ, and preached the kingdom of God, which, when received, made repentance needful for all who had opposed the truth of God, or had been living to please themselves. It was not the thunders of the law that the apostles resorted to on such occasions. They told of God and of Christ. They preached the Lordship and Christship of Jesus. They began with God and His Son, and thus penetrated to the inmost soul of their hearers. Is not this the way to be successful now? Philip preached Christ to the Samaritans. Paul preached the kingdom of God, and taught those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, in his hired house at Rome. God's gospel he proclaimed, which is the power of God unto salvation.

And here another feature in their preaching may be noticed. They presented the Lord Jesus as God's provision for the need and desires of the soul. In this they followed the example of the great teacher Himself. “He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away,” is the Holy Spirit's delineation by the virgin Mary of God's manner of acting amongst men. To the hungry the Lord offered himself as the true manna, to the thirsty as the giver of living water, to the weary and heavy laden He offered rest, to the blind He could give sight, and to the sheep He was the shepherd. All in whose souls there was a desire for what the world could not supply found in him the answer to the craving of their heart.

In a similar manner the apostles presented him to individuals or congregations. in the house of Cornelius at Cesarea, in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, in the prison at Philippi, Christ was presented as God's remedy, and God's full provision for the fallen children of Adam. The gentiles heard of forgiveness of sins through faith in Him. The Jews were instructed in the way of procuring a perfect justification, which the law never had provided, and never could. At Philippi, Paul spoke of salvation, but to one who was anxious about it. They ministered God's grace as was suited to exercised souls. If they spoke to an individual of salvation, it was because the heart was exercised about it. If they preached to a congregation, they pointed out it was for a class—for those who wanted it. Take the different sermons in the Acts. At Pentecost, it was the question of the heart-pricked ones which elicited the way of forgiveness. In Solomon's porch, forgiveness is assured to all who repent. The Son of God has been sent first to Israel; but those only who repented would know forgiveness of sins. To Cornelius and his company, the Lord is presented as the object of faith, by whom souls could get forgiveness. At Antioch in Pisidia, forgiveness is preached to all, and a perfect justification through faith in him. At Lystra, God is proclaimed as the Creator, and the giver of all temporal blessings. At Athens the unknown god was revealed, and the future judgment announced. To Jews and gentiles God's grace was preached; to the heathen god was revealed. But is it not the case that God's grace was preached as meeting something the heart needed? Faith in Christ is clearly set forth as the way of salvation and forgiveness; but the manner of its announcement supposes an exercised heart, a needy soul. How different is Paul's language to the jailor, from his speech to the careless multitude in the Areopagus! The jailor has his question answered; the Athenians are informed of the unknown god, and warned of the coming judgment. Where there was a need already, the apostles ministered to it; where it did not exist, they attempted to create it by preaching about God and about Christ, the kingdom of God, the gospel of God, the person. The work of Christ and its results, they set before their hearers.

Such a method of preaching did then, and always will, lead to a deep and lasting work. Should faith in Christ be regarded simply as a means of getting to heaven? There is no other way surely. But is not the gospel rather to be regarded as a divine remedy for the fearful results of sin; and

God's method of deliverance and relief for souls acted on by his spirit? A remedy, yet more, far more, than a remedy; for it tells us of more than deliverance from wrath. Still it is God's way of meeting what man needs, and is intended for those who have felt that need. It is not an easy road to heaven, but a way of escape from the deserts of sin. For the cross of Christ tells us what sin is in God's sight; it shows what the deserts of sin are; it manifests what the love of God and of Christ is, and what has been provided for sinners.

That the gospel of God's grace is preached with a fullness and freeness, to which the world has long been a stranger, is a matter for deep thankfulness. All should rejoice that in the nineteenth century the message of the evangelist is again heard in its clearness and simplicity. But in all recovered truth there is a tendency, from man's infirmity, and the desire to give due prominence to the truth recovered, so to magnify it that its relation to other parts of divine revelation is in danger of being overlooked. has not God's grace been sometimes so preached as almost to overlook the need of repentance; and the offer of salvation been presented as what all may partake of without the conscience being aroused, and the heart exercised as to the need and cause of this rich and wonderful provision of God for the display of His glory, and the deliverance of sinners from the wrath to come? C. E. S.

Chapter 199

Thoughts on Revelation 2:1-11

It is good to be occupied with spiritual affections, or rather with the subjects which vivify them, with those things which are not seen, which God has revealed to us, and which are of the world to come.

The Holy Spirit presents to us many of those things which we shall enjoy later, and with much more detail than we can expect. That which the Spirit says to the churches is for the peace and the joy of the children of God in the glory which is corning. The Spirit says, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” This, therefore, concerns us individually. According to His faithfulness, the Lord Jesus takes cognizance of the present state of the Church. That which is in question here is not accomplished salvation, but the particular state in which the Church is found, or even the state of such and such an individual, as we may judge from verse 2.

“I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience,” &c. Then also, “He that hath an ear, let him hear,” &c. And at the same time, Jesus is there revealed to us as judging the state of those to whom this is addressed. There are also particular promises fit to sustain the remnant of faithful ones, in the midst of the special circumstances by which their faith is tried. The promises which are presented here, differ from those which are made to the Church in an absolute and general manner. They apply also to the Church, and the Church enjoys them. However, they have particularly as their object to sustain faith in the circumstances in which we may be found, whether as a remnant in the midst of the unfaithfulness of the mass of the professors, or as faithful in the midst of the trials which we are called to pass through. Now, for the conflict, we need discernment, in order to understand where the conflict is found; what is its main point or specialty. Faithfulness is found in contrast with the evil which the Lord reveals, because we are on God's side in this world.

We need to understand that the interests of Christ are our own—that His battles are our battles; and the more we lay hold of this idea, the stronger and happier we are. (Ex. 17:16.) Happily, in Jesus these things do not fail us. Although Jesus identifies Himself with the Church, He nevertheless judges the state of the Church, and He here presents Himself as judge, but in love.

This book is divided into three distinct parts: first, the things which John saw; secondly, the things which are; thirdly, those which are to come. The things which John saw, are mentioned in chapter 1; those which are, in chapters 2, 3, including that which concerns the seven churches; those which are to come begin at chapter 4, and fill the remainder of the Apocalypse. Christ manifests Himself here as judge, not as in the latter day for the wicked, but as a priest who discerns all in order to remedy the evil, You will find in Leviticus that, after the consecration of the priests, all the things as to which it was a question of being clean and unclean are presented together. It was they who were to know how to discern between the clean and the unclean. The priesthood had to discern everything. And it is also what belongs to the Christian, not as to one who fears the imputation of sin (although he has a responsibility), but because he has been anointed by God to distinguish between good and evil, according to the holiness of the service of God.

That is why Jesus takes to Himself this character of authority; that is the general idea which He gives of Himself. “These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.” (Ver. 1.)

We find in all the addresses to the churches these words, “I know thy works.” He takes cognizance of all that is done. It is very comforting that God has put us in such a position; and we are responsible according to the grace of the position. This responsibility increases according to the measure of grace where we are placed.

A servant and a slave do that which the master demands; but the child enters more intimately into the interests of the family, and he is responsible according to the position in which he is placed. It is good that we too should consider ourselves under this point of view. An Israelite might have done things which a priest would not have dared to do; many things were required of the priest for the service of God, to which no other man among the people was bound; then he was to discern good from evil, according to his nearness to God, as the anointed of God. We ourselves, also, are priests. We have the knowledge of good and evil—a privilege acquired through sin at the beginning; so that this has been our ruin, but, at the same time, a thing which proceeded from Him who willed it thus—a thing good in itself, and which we possess now according to the intelligence of the Holy Spirit, in virtue of the obedience of the second Adam.

When Satan led away Adam to infringe the prohibition which God had made him, Satan added “God doth know, that, in the day ye eat thereof” —of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil— “then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” The word adds “The Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.” Two things are always found, as in the garden of Eden, responsibility and life—the two trees. Adam acted in his responsibility, and failed as to it, before having life. This is why God must needs drive him out of Eden. because God did not permit that he should have life together with sin. These are two great principles, responsibility of good and evil, and life: Christ alone has reconciled them.

When the law was introduced, it presented responsibility, and not life. The law places man in responsibility as to his salvation; but instead of life, it pronounces condemnation and death. Christ, on the contrary, takes the responsibility on Himself, and becomes at the same time the source of life. Christ took upon Himself our responsibility before the judgment of God, and has placed us under a much higher responsibility—responsibility according to that life which He has given us. Consequently, He judges Christians, not to condemn them, in their every-day conduct. But treating them according to the holiness of that life, He judges their walk, that grace may always be given them, according to their need, and to maintain them in communion with the Father and with Himself.

He intercedes at the same time for His own before God, not to obtain their justification, which He has perfectly accomplished, but to take them out of their difficulties, and maintain them in the path of faith. Jesus, therefore, takes notice of the state of the Church and says, “I know thy works.” It is not to condemn, but it is as being priest, and thus having to manifest the new man according to all the grace which is given him, and we shall see how far this responsibility goes.

Verses 2, 3 “I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found

them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted." Here are many excellent things, and one might have thought that there was nothing but approbation; but it is not so. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee." Christ cannot come down from the height of His love. He would have fruits according to the love which He has for us. A worldly person would say, Is it absolutely necessary that I should do that? Have I need of these things? Am I bound to do that, as a Christian? But the love of Christ cannot be content without seeing fruits. It is like a father who loves that his child should succeed, that he should bear fruits capable of rejoicing him, and in keeping with the love which he shows him. The child may be slothful or lazy, but the father devotes himself to him; if there is not a response to the care taken by that love, neither is there contentment on the part of the father. If there is not with the conscience of that love, the same ready response as at the beginning, there is not the sound which goes to the heart of Jesus. It is better not to play at all than to play false tones. One has abandoned one's first love, and there is not that love which responds to love. Jesus is not a hard Master; He only requires these things from us in love. He says, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." It is something which does not suit the ear of Christ, something which is not in tune: it is the first thing of which Christ takes notice— "Thou hast left thy first love."

They had patience; they could not bear them which were evil; they had labored for the name of Jesus, but— "they had left their first love." If love is wanting, something essential is wanting. The heart has begun to be occupied with itself. A wife may do for her husband all that she did before, work as much, be wanting in nothing as to her duties; but if the husband does not find in her that which satisfies the heart, all is wanting: the wife has ceased to be occupied with him in the same manner.

We love something, and if it is the affections of faith, Christ is the object of them. As soon as He ceases to be the object of our thoughts, the thing is seen; He at least perceives it. After being delivered, we are full of love, and we only see the light. We think that sin is dead within. In the measure that the heart is filled with other things, the springs of this love are weakened; and if we ask ourselves, Do you still think as much of your Savior as when you received Him for the first time into your heart? We notice that we have left our first love. I can be occupied with good things; I may seek souls; but if I no longer think as much about Jesus—about what He is for me, all is marred. If I am before God, I am always little; I feel myself responsible to God, and I am nothing. I judge myself, there is love; but if I get far from Him, I think of myself, and weakness increases. There is no longer the same discernment. There is no longer the same love. One is no longer at a height to view things as Christ views them; one is not at a height to show grace. This is the leaving of one's first love, and of the patience of our hope.

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1:3), reminds them continually of "their work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ." In the Ephesian church are found works, labor, and patience; but they are no longer the work of faith, the labor of love, the patience of hope. The Lord says to them, "Thou hast abandoned thy first love." Each one of us can address the same question to himself, "Am I as much occupied with Christ? Have I not left my first love? And, if we are in this state, cannot the Lord apply these words to us? "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

Verse 7. “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life.” It is not with us as with Adam, who had only a responsibility of obedience: our responsibility refers to a conflict with Satan; and the proof that we are the strongest is that we can conquer the power of Satan. We may fail, it is true. If we were in nowise in the conflict against Satan, it would be because we had not life; but, besides this conflict in principle against him, one must also conquer in the details.

The tree of life, which is here referred to, is no longer in man's paradise, but in God's. In Eden, the paradise of man, there were two trees. Satan succeeded in entering there, and all was marred; but God's paradise was arranged by Him and for Him, after all was lost, and that by a work of love and glory, which causes the other to be forgotten. The paradise of God is a work of grace, which is the consequence of what it is God's good pleasure to do when man has failed. The paradise of man was a test of what man is; that of God is the consequence of the fact that Christ has resisted and overcome all evil. As the other was the place where the responsibility of the first Adam was—responsibility as to which he failed, we are placed with the life of Christ in us, and put to the test in the midst of evil with that life, not as men, but as Christians. The world thinks to be put to the test as men, but they are mistaken; the Christian alone is put to the test, in order to manifest in the world a life which is not of this world. Now let us see how Christ introduces us into the midst of all that.

The question is not, if I conduct myself well, I shall be accepted. No, it is not a question of that. The world thinks that it is a question of a conflict, destined to satisfy certain demands of God; it is an error. For the Christian, the conflict is the exercise of the power of the Holy Spirit in him who has already eternal life, who obtains the victory over the world, of which Satan is the prince and the head.

In order for us to enter into the conflict, it is necessary for Christ to take away all our sins; for if any remained, it would be with God that we should have to do. The difficulty was found on that side, and it is the practical state of souls not set free; but we must be without sin before God; and being His in this world, and He being for us, we can enter into this conflict—where evil does not enter at all, where flesh cannot subsist—and there have the victory over Satan.

Verses 8, 9. The Lord addresses Himself here to the Church of Smyrna, as being “the first and the last, which was dead and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.”

Verse 10. “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

It is very evident that the promises and the character of Christ apply to the circumstances of that church. Here is something striking. It is not a question of knowing how far the heart responds to Christ; but of knowing if it is worth while leaving everything, even one's own life, in order to enjoy the privileges which are in Christ.

That which comes in here is the result of leaving the first love, as a Church: for it is not necessarily true as to individuals. Persecutions follow as the consequence of that which is not in the mind of God. The widows complain of being neglected in the daily ministration. (Acts 6:1.) It is no longer

Christ who alone occupies the thoughts: they have left their first love. When that happens, the world holds somewhat the place of Christ.

The Church must learn that everything is above. “I know thy works,” &c. “Fear none of those things which thou shalt have to suffer.” Christ might have said, Thou shalt not suffer; but He wishes us to understand that we must be little, poor, and despised, and that one cannot be rich. I do not speak of temporal riches, but of that poverty which has nothing but its faith to present; and that is what God wishes.

If the Church suffer, if it is tormented in different ways, there is also another suffering. The Church had nothing to present but its faith, which could sustain it. Now the Jews who were there boasted of being the true people of God; they said they were rich, and blasphemed. The Christians, for them, were only miserable heretics, and sectarians: and the Church felt its position contemptible in the eyes of those who, according to appearances, were the people of God. That is more painful than when the world speaks evil of us.

The Church was afflicted, persecuted, and poor; but Jesus says to it, “Fear none of those things.” The Jews said insulting things; but the Lord said, “Thou art rich.” In this we have a lesson. Christ does not prevent our suffering: we must make up our minds to suffer; but if Christ says to us, “Thou art rich,” that is enough for us. And He will only have for disciples those who are content with what He says, “Thou art rich.” If any one is not satisfied with that, well, let him go to the world.

There is, however, something remarkable here. Jesus says to them, “The devil shall put some of you into prison.” He attributes it to Satan, as if He were not able to prevent it. He says you shall be tried. (Ver. 10.) I leave thee to suffer; it is the time of the power of darkness, but it will end. Whatever, then, may be the power of Jesus, He changes nothing in the position of actual suffering. It is necessary that the moral ways of God should have their course, and that the work should be accomplished according to the good or the evil which is found in those in whom it takes place. It is necessary that He should leave to the enemy his own part, according to that which is due to him, so to speak—according to the state of those who are the objects of the government of God. He leaves power to Satan in order to manifest the glory of Christ by the Church; and if we are not near Christ, Satan gets the victory as to things present, and Christ is not glorified.

All power belongs to Christ: we have nothing to fear. But Satan is there, and the Church is responsible for the manifestation of the glory of Christ; and as soon as we leave Christ, we can no longer do it. It is a question of realizing all this power of Christ, according to the position where we are individually; and we must be near enough to Christ to get the victory over Satan, and to do perfectly well all that we are called to do according to our position. It is not a question of leading or of being a general.

If each soldier does his duty in his own place, the victory is won; and that may go so far as to lay down one's life.

It is not a question of getting life: we have it; and we shall reign. It is a question of the Church placed there to manifest the power of Christ by the Holy Spirit, to manifest His glory where evil exists, before spiritual wickednesses, and to enjoy the same results of the victory as Christ Himself: the crown of life in the paradise of God, as Jesus has Himself, and with Him.

It is not only not being lost; but it is to be with God, and to get the victory over Satan, who has the power of death. What we have to understand is that each one in his place, from the head down to the skirts of the garment, and however little he may be, has his place and his responsibility to manifest the power of Christ; and if he is not in the power of Christ, he is overcome. May God give us this strength, and render us capable of accomplishing in all things His will!

Chapter 200

Thoughts on Revelation 3:7-13

The Lord is here the One who sets before the saints the “open door.” As the good Shepherd in John 10, to Him the porter opens, and He sets the door open for them, the door connected with the word, the testimony. great door and effectual is opened unto me.” (1 Cor. 16:9.) And “a door was opened unto me of the Lord.” (2 Cor. 2:12.) The Lord's titles are here taken from Isa. 22 He, the true servant, shall bear the key of David.

In the first four churches we get the whole ecclesiastical history of the Church down to the Lord's coming. The types in which the Lord addresses them are all ecclesiastical in connection with the description given of Him in chapter 1. The One who walks in the midst of the candlesticks. But in the last three churches the characters in which He is presented are all in reference to His coming and the millennium. So here I get the substitution of the morning Star and the kingdom to Thyatira. To Sardis it is the One who has the seven Spirits of God (that is, the government of the world, as Isa. 40:2), “The spirit of wisdom and understanding,” &c. to Philadelphia, the One who has the key of David (Isa. 22); to Laodicea, the faithful and true Witness, who, when every other witness has failed, will be the beginning of the creation of God. His coming to Sardis is presented as His coming to the world in 1 Thess. 5. He comes as a thief to those who are not aware. In Sardis I get Protestantism. They are overtaken as those who are of the darkness. In the first three churches I get nothing of the coming of the Lord (except it be to remove the candlestick at Ephesus). Then I come to the ecclesiastical end in Thyatira and His coming brought in and the substitution of the kingdom and the morning Star. After this all looks on the millennium.

In Matt. 16 the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed to Peter. There are no keys to the Church. It is very important to see that that which is given to Peter in Matt. 16 as to binding and loosing on earth is in chapter 18 extended to two or three wherever they are gathered in the Lord's name. This was never committed to any of the apostles but Peter.

“Whose soever sins ye remit,” &c. (John 20:23.) Here we get the administration of the forgiveness of sins on earth. “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” It is not a question of imputation of sins.

The Church when spoken of by Peter is always that which Christ builds, and therefore unfailing. In 1 Corinthians it is that which man builds, and there you get a whole system to be tried with fire. That which Christ builds will never be tried. You get fatal error by applying that which is spoken of man's building to that which Christ builds. We get God's work in building spoken of in two ways in Eph. 2:21, 22: first, as that which is going on, growing, “Groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord; secondly, as a complete thing, “Ye also are builded,” &c. In Eph. 1:22, 23 we get the Church as the body, the final result, the accomplishment not yet come.

I should say the Church (the assembly on earth) is in ruins, the body not. It makes it much more simple if you use the word assembly instead of church. In Heb. 12 we get the general assembly and also the assembly of the firstborn, whose names are enrolled in heaven. This refers to the fact

that in eastern cities there were two distinct classes of inhabitants. First, there were those who were born citizens, and whose names were enrolled, possessing privileges peculiar to themselves (Acts 21:39; 22:25-29); secondly, there were those who were merely inhabitants forming the greatest part of the population who were only called together on particular occasions. These formed the general assembly.

The characters in which Christ is presented to the church at Philadelphia is as the Holy and the True, and what is looked for in the saints now is holiness and truth. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” I cannot have holiness apart from the revelation of God. There can be no holiness where there is no truth. The Church was to be the pillar and ground of the truth. Truth is not to be looked for elsewhere. If it is not found in the Church, where else will it be found.

“The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” The gate is the seat of power. It is the “power of hades.” He who sets before them the open door is He who has the keys of hades.

There are two things which have been running side by side from the beginning—responsibility and grace. There were two trees in Eden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, responsibility; and the tree of life, grace. Man failed in the responsibility, and lost the grace.

Under the law the word was, “Do this and thou shalt live.” Again man fails in the responsibility, that is the “doing,” and therefore does not get the life. But Christ comes, takes all the responsibility, and then becomes Himself the eternal life. “Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The Lord does not discuss the character of their works. He simply says, “I know thy works.” The saints are cast upon Christ Himself. He says, “My word, my patience, my name,” and the result is that He practically associates us with Himself. “I will make,” “I have loved thee,” “Twill keep thee,” “I come quickly.” He presents Himself personally to them. So to those who overcome He says, “I will make,” “I will write,” may God” (four times), “and my new name.” “The word of my patience.” It is Christ's own patience, as though He had said, “I wait and you wait.” The “new name” is in connection with the new place He has taken as the risen man in the heavens at the right hand of God.

We find the coming of the Lord presented to these three churches in three different ways. To Thyatira He was coming to the overcomers, as the One who would substitute the kingdom and its blessedness for the present state of ruin. It was for their comfort. He would give them power over the nations and the morning Star. To Sardis He would come as a thief at such an hour as they thought not, just as He will come to the world taking them by surprise. To Philadelphia it was the personal coming. “I come quickly.”

In the transfiguration scene the cloud is the same cloud which filled the temple, the skekinah glory, what Peter calls the more excellent glory into which the priests could not enter; but in Luke 9 they enter the cloud with Jesus, they go into the excellent glory, they enter the unseen and eternal with Him who is the bright and morning Star.

Take Philadelphia out of Sardis and you have Laodicea. Sardis merges into the other two.

Where do we get the Greek church? It would perhaps be included in Thyatira, but it was never the special place of the action of the Spirit of God. Thyatira would be the Romish church and goes on

to the coming of the Lord. It is connected with the commencement of Rev. 17—Babylon. It is not that she is seduced by those who are outside, as is the case with Pergamos, where it was the Balaam form of evil; but she has Jezebel in her midst, like Babylon the mother of harlots, who is found drunken with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus. The address to her is, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins,” &c. (Chap. 18:4.)

The great thing is to be faithful though you be little. “Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

Chapter 201

On Revelation: Part 1

The first thing I find in the Apocalypse is that this revelation was not committed to the Church as being in its natural relationship with the Head of the house. Just as we have distinguished in prophecy these two cases—that in which the people were acknowledged of God and that in which they were not, so we have as regards the Apocalypse something like the latter of these two cases. It is a man who receives the communication of it, not the body. There is, however, a slight difference, on account of the seven churches. It is not an internal communication, a communication of grace (an ecclesiastical communication, as one might say, in the good sense of the word); but it is a prophetical communication concerning a certain time.

Verse 4. It is not properly the Trinity, for in that case there would be the Father. Verse 6. One sees here the position of the Church in this governmental order of God, which characterizes the Apocalypse. In verse 13, it is “a Son of man,” not Son of man: it is to express the character in which He shows Himself. He is servant here; yet not absolutely, for He was clothed with a garment down to the foot. It was not tucked up for service, and His girdle is not brought down so as to strengthen the loins. He wears it about the breast like a girdle of righteousness. Then, in verse 14, He is “Jehovah.” Verse 16: we have His power in authority, authority over that which acts in power as administering in the Church. All that is authority He holds in His hand. They are not administrators as gifts; it is rather as government.

Verse 17: John fell at His feet as dead. It is a man who receives a glorious vision, as a prophet (Daniel). Verse 18. “I am the first and the last” (Jehovah). “I am he that liveth and was dead.” He was passed through the state where sin had reduced man. The 19th verse gives us the division of the Apocalypse.

Verse 20: “the angels;” they are the administrative representatives. If as head of the state I had before me the representatives of a dozen towns, I could, according to the case, address one of them and say to him, How is it that such a thing should take place in such or such locality? They are mystical administrative representatives of the Church. It is not that angels go and come from the Church to God; it is the idea of angels, without saying that they are persons. The “angel of Jehovah” is an expression to signify that mysterious representation of God when it is not He Himself. For the rest, it is a difficult expression to define rightly.

Chapter ii. Ephesus. Verse 4: here is Christ in His general character-head and inspector. It seems to me pretty clear that the seven churches are the moral history of the Church from the time of John until the end. First, this number seven shows that it forms a whole. If it is a complete idea, it cannot be the aggregate of the Church at that time, because they are totally different states. The Lord could not say at the same time, as if to a general church, “Thou hast them that hold the doctrine of Balaam,” and, “Thou hast kept the word of my patience.” Then, if it were only a question of those seven churches, it is incredible that He holds the seven stars, as a whole, in His hand, and that He only thinks of seven churches when there were thousands in the world. (Ver. 2.) The stream still runs, but the spring had dried up. Christ in these epistles, we see, will not bear

with anything short of the primitive state of the Church it is that which He had set up Himself in forming the Church. If they do not return, the Lord will take away the candlestick; and we find very little of repentance in the history of the seven churches. From the very first judgment is pronounced on the Church; only we have the different phases through which it passes to arrive there.

Smyrna. Verse 10: “some of you.” Although it has to do with an angel, He will not speak as leaving all the responsibility on one only. It is instructive to see that the Lord, who has all power, allows Satan to act, and is content with saying (as judge), “Be thou faithful unto death.” We do not find here the communications according to grace, nor that care which belongs to priesthood. They are left simply in their own responsibility. There would be no chastisement, if there were not a cause. . . There surely was at Smyrna a certain decline, which was the occasion for it; for the persecution, which is first for the sake of Christ, is often also a correction, as we see in Heb. 12:4, 5. As for myself, I do not make up a theory of a gradual decline. God may, for a moment, stop the outward evil, as in the time of Josiah, although the evil continues underneath, and works in an underground way. He maintains responsibility so as to bring one to feel the need of resting upon Him. What does overcoming mean in these passages? I answer, To hold fast, in spite of the flesh and Satan.

Pergamos. Now Christ explains the word. He here again judges within. But it is not merely a moral judgment. He begins to exercise judgment on one part of the Church (perhaps as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira), for there was yet much good in the Church. But it is the Church itself judged in a portion of its members. “Thou hast there them I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.” Verse 15: the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes is a doctrine which sanctions evil deeds in the Church. It suffices to know what is said about this in the word. (Ver. 6.) Verse 17. Now that the Church is found where Satan's seat is, there must be a seal for heaven. The Church was losing its heavenly character; then Jesus encourages this character. It is an exhortation to be heavenly, particularly addressed to individuals. When all is heavenly, there is no need of that exhortation. The manna—not that which is necessary in this world, but the enjoyment of Christ, known in heaven, as having been in humiliation. It is, in a word, a heavenly character in intimacy with Jesus, for the manna which is offered is a hidden manna; and this name on the stone, is a name that no one knows but he that receives it.

This epistle is clear enough, to my mind, to enable me to apply it to the time of Constantine.

Thyatira. “The Son of God” —this is a new title, distinct, outside of the vision. It is necessary that Christ should separate Himself somewhat from the Church. He isolates Himself a little in His person because the Church has so lost its characteristic features, that He cannot really own it. It is this new title which causes the change in the order of the promise and of the warning. The result of it is, that those who had faith, were much more faithful. Hence He distinguishes the conquerors in a more particular manner; and, not being able hopefully to occupy Himself with the improvement of the Church, He speaks of His coming as the sole object of hope. The Church, as such, is clean set aside. The Church is, by nature, a remnant; but that character was so totally lost in Thyatira, that it was needful to form again a remnant. With the churches which follow, (save that He has the seven spirits and the seven stars, that is to say, all that suffices for the Church, whatever may come,) Jesus never takes a revealed character, because the Church has lost the character in which He can be in its midst, as Church. The Church must therefore by special faith lay hold on Him of that

which He is for the circumstances in which it is found, because the character which He takes is not His natural character (one may say) even in judgment. Verse 19: He finds His delight in owning the good which was found there. Verse 22. “I will cast her into a bed;” she is an adulterous woman. In hell she will have her bed! There are children born of her prostitution, and the Lord will kill them with death (by judgment). Her children, are those who draw their faith from her; the thing must be understood morally (thus Bossuet); but there are servants who commit fornication with her (Fenelon, for instance, and many others). Verse 24: “But unto you I say,” he distinguishes a remnant very plainly. “I will put upon you none other burden;” the Lord would add nothing more. He only asked that they should be faithful in keeping themselves from Jezebel. In truth, it is already a great thing to keep oneself from Popery. Since that, indeed, there have been other communications from the Lord. Verse 26: “To him will I give power over” all nations. He is coming; then when He has come, He will give authority to this little remnant who have been faithful in the midst of the nations. He gives the morning star; this is the portion of the Church, to have its part with Christ, before He comes. Having traced the failure with Jezebel, it is the coming of the Lord which is the only answer to faith.

These churches are never the energy of God, which produces the effect—the blessing; but they are the state which results from it, when the effect is produced, and God confides it to the responsibility of man. God forms the Church; after that He declares the responsibility of the Church. It is quite simple. Does Christ judge what God has done? Surely not.

We can divide the seven churches into two categories: 1st, the first four; 2ndly, the last three. As to the first four, all is ended with Thyatira. God works anew in Sardis. He recommences, so to speak, and all terminates with Laodicea. Now, when God has wrought, He brings man into what He has done, with the responsibility of maintaining it. If man fails therein, if he spoils it or allows it to be spoiled, God rejects all that is spoiled. That is what has happened for the Church. God wrought to establish a testimony for His Son; man, who was placed in that testimony, has failed in it. Ephesus in its first love, &c.; then the state of things becomes so bad that God rejects it, without abandoning His mode of action. He recommences at Sardis according to the same principle; but at Laodicea the Son, to whom testimony was to be rendered, is outside: then all is spewed out.

Verse 27. See Rev. 18:20. We do not get here the relationship of the Church: but that which is governmental and of judgment. It is always the case in the Revelation. Judgment is not our habitual thought; but there are cases where one feels that the righteousness of God is a good thing. In Thyatira, the evil is complete. It is no longer corruption only. Hence, when the evil takes the character of an adversary, it is a thought according to God to bring in judgment.

There is a connection between Thyatira and the Babylon of chapters xvii. and xviii. of Revelation, although there are also in these chapters other elements. Then the Lord distinguishes the remnant in the plainest manner by saying, “To you I say, the rest who are in Thyatira.” If one commits fornication with Jezebel, there is indeed danger of throwing oneself into the depths of Satan and of going through the experience of these and not of the depths of God.

“The morning star” is the coming of Jesus preceding His manifestation to the world, Peter goes up to the point where Paul begins, he speaks of prophecy as pointing out the evil things, the events. He warns me; whereas the morning star is Christ Himself, my hope, outside of all other things, turning my eye towards the dawn of day. For me, the coming of Christ is not prophecy, because

the coming of Christ is my own proper hope. I am as it were in a dome which has no opening but at the summit, so that I am in immediate connection with Christ in heaven, and a stranger to all the rest. Peter limits his doctrine to what he saw. He saw the Lord up to the moment when the cloud concealed Him from their eyes.

Chapter iii. Sardis. We have here a beginning again. The Lord presents Himself in an already revealed character: the seven stars, and in a new character; the seven spirits—not the seven spirits which are before His throne. It is what suffices for all times, where the Church is found. The "seven spirits" show fullness of action; the "seven stars," fullness of power in government. Whilst going through the experience of our weakness, we ought not to forget that there is, even now, in Christ, all that is needed in order to work with blessing and effect.

"Thou hast a name that thou livest" (renown). It was not merely negative, for there was enough to deserve renown among men. The Lord distinguishes sons from things; but He judges persons according to things, "the things which remain," the good which remained, whether people or things. I see here that, whatever be the state of failure, God expects that the works will be complete, according to the light which He has given. Protestantism will be judged according to the light which was given at the Reformation, and not according to what it is now. In practice this remark is important, because it happens that men lose the light soon after it is given; and yet God judges according to the light which was given. So it is no reason for saying, I did not know it. It often happens that when all has been lost, one pretends to have all, by retaining the reputation which had been acquired when all was had. This is the case in Thyatira. We find here, moreover, a very solemn thing. It is that Sardis is threatened with the same judgment as the world. Although recognized as the Church, and although it had a name that it lived, this professing Church is threatened to undergo the woe which is declared in 1 Thess. 5 as not to come upon Christians. Sardis is not the remnant of Thyatira, because, after all, that remnant would be dead whilst having a name that it lived, and that of those chosen ones a very small number would be walking with the Lord. It would thus be a very poor remnant, and it would be sad enough to belong to it. One must always remember that these churches, such as they are pointed out, are not the energy of God which wrought the thing, when, after it is done, God confides it to responsibility.

There is yet another remark to make on these last three churches. It is this: the coming of Christ is foremost, whether as a hope or in judgment for the conscience, because there was no longer either hope or means of putting the Church in its right position. It is no longer a question of seeking to put Protestantism in its ecclesiastical state. No: "I will come on thee as a thief." Save the fact that He has the seven stars, none of the characters which Jesus takes after this belong to the revelation given of Him in the first chapter. If, for my part, I rest upon Christ now, I must lay hold of Him in a special character, according to the need in which I find myself. The book of life, the book of citizenship—one is registered therein—one has the right to fight. It is a great thing to walk with the Lord; but save the fact that they had failed, I do not find much here—little relationship with the Lord, little intimacy. All is corrupted. They are faithful, it is true; they keep themselves from that corruption, but there is little specialty. They escape from this worldliness— "They have not defiled their garments;" all is negative. Protestantism has hardly the sense that one is in relationship with God, and that there are many things to know in Him; there is but little spiritual exercise. Protestantism is insipid; it has not the idea of a God who is present. Verse 4, read "But thou hast a few names."

Philadelphia. Here one is quite outside this class of titles; one is not ecclesiastically but morally outside the characters which He takes, when He has in view all the Church. Verse 7: we have in these titles, the “holy,” and the “true,” as well as the power which holds the door open for us, that we may attend to His service.

Some say, In keeping such or such a position I keep a door open for myself. Well! I find here, that it is Christ alone who has the keys. In verse 8 it is very touching, that without being able to say any more, He says; “I know thy works.” He thus turns away the attention from the works to direct it on the path which He has opened for working still. Although there was very little, it was already a great deal, for there was but little strength. It is no longer some of those violent ones who take the kingdom by force, but Christ, who has the key, holds the door open before these feeble ones, and that suffices. If there was much strength, it would surely be more remarkable; but when with little strength one is faithful notwithstanding, that is the beauty of faithfulness. Verse 9: historically, they were Jews, who tormented the Christians; it may be that, at the end, these Jews will be found again and do the same thing. One may understand by “Jews,” people of their character (namely, some assembly constituted on Jewish principles, a pretension to be the people of God by natural descent, whether race or principles, &c.). This expression— “I will make them,” &c.—is very vague; it may be thus understood, that without being joined to them, they will own that the Philadelphians are the remnant that God loves. In verse 10, we have the reason, the wherefore of the blessing: “Thou hast kept the word of my patience.” It is not only that we wait for Him, but that we wait as He waits. One keeps the word of that patience, and that word forms the affections and the conduct.

“The hour of temptation.” A temptation is coming, which will try all the dwellers upon the earth. We must not confound the temptation with the tribulation; the latter is more peculiar to Judea; it is Jacob's trouble. (Jer. 30:7.) But here, although this temptation embraces the whole habitable world, Philadelphia is not found there, so that it is neither in the great temptation, nor in the great tribulation. In verse 11 mark well, that there is here a very positive revelation of His coming, and that it is not the same here as for Sardis, to which the threat is addressed of being overtaken as by a thief. The contrast with Sardis is remarkable enough. If we are keeping the word of His patience, though weak, we shall be kept out of the hour of temptation. First, all Jewish character is set aside; secondly, one is identified with Jesus in His awaiting. Verse 12, the promise has for me a very touching form; He says, “My,” “My.” In this address, we see Christ found again on the earth; He was there found with little strength; He suffered from the Jews; the porter opened Him the door. (John 10) So it is here. That is why the figures are rather Jewish. At the same time, we find the Church also. There are the great moral elements of Christ and the Church, although there is not the power displayed in judgment before the world. As to the characters which Christ takes, in these three churches, there is this to notice: in Sardis, the Church; in Philadelphia, David and the kingdom; in Laodicea, the world. We can understand His resuming successively these characters for the end.

Verse 14. Laodicea. That which Jesus essentially is in Himself; not however as a character available for the Church in holiness and truth. If the Church fails, He takes His range in His own personal character, more independently of what the Church is. He is the ■ρχ■ of all things, always, in Himself: He is that, come what may. When the Church was the manifestation of Himself to the world, He was something for it; at least, as motive in conduct. Here the Church does no

longer respond to Him; then He takes, in Himself, every character in testimony: “The A men,” in whom every promise is secured; “the faithful witness,” &e. That which is wanting to the Church, He is that in Himself— “the beginning of the creation of God.” The ■ρχ■ of all things. Christ is that which responds to the primitive idea that was in God before all things. The ■ρχ■; the beginning in theory, and the end in practice. The main thought in building a house is to have a root'; but in practice, a roof is the last thing that is made. The word “principle,” comes nearest to the sense; but it does not give all the idea of ■ρχ■. These titles lead us to form the setting aside of the Church.

Verse 16: they did not see this faithful and true witness; therefore they are content with a miserable state, which is nothing at all as testimony. They are so far off, that they do not perceive what they are come to, and they think themselves rich. For them it is not worth while to be hot or cold for Jesus; it is complete thoughtlessness and indifference. “And thou knowest not that thou art.... the miserable.” Until the Church is spewed out He does not cease to counsel. As to the characters which Christ takes, here; it is not as saying that He will act towards Laodicea according to these titles; but He prepares the Spirit of the Church to know that those things will be accomplished in Him; it is what He will do, when He accomplishes His promises, &c. In this manner, Laodicea forms a line after the Church is gone, to lead to the throne from which comes forth the judgments in the following chapters. “I counsel thee to buy,” because it is always a question of responsibility. Verse 20: there is so much apathy, that the Lord contented Himself with knocking at the door. Verse 21: “to him that overcometh,” who will have overcome that indifferentism. It is, indeed something to open the door to be saved, and to ascend the throne. When there is indifference for so precious an object, truly it is sad. “On my throne.” It has been said that it is the highest promise; for my part, it seems to me that it is the promise which is most simply necessary; it is the minimum of the reward, because one must either reign or not be there at all. At Sardis, repentance is proposed to the Church; the promise is conditional for the whole. At Laodicea, the invitation is individual.

In these churches, we have the moral character; but the manner in which that ends in judgment, is not said. For my part, I do not occupy myself with the ruined house, which is going to fall; I take away the stones, because I know that the Lord is coming to fetch that which belongs to Him. The action of the Spirit among Protestants rather than among Papists, is to me a sign of the approach of the judgments, because God is acting in that which is outside the original Church. That makes me understand the blessing of being like Jonathan, who having gone forward in simple faith, repelled the enemies of Israel without participating in the follies of Saul. It may be that, in the Roman states, popery will extend its sway over all, whilst in other states, Germany, Holland, England, &c., protestantism will end by being merely a negative state of things without importance. This quite naturally leads to the throne. Christ has said His last word in the Church! it is a question now of the introduction of the Firstborn into the world.

Chapter iv. Here Christ is no longer seen on the earth, in the midst of the candlesticks; He is no longer occupied with them. He is now seen in heaven. All is over with the Church down here. Verse 2 “a throne.” It is not Christ in the Church, nor at Jerusalem, but in heaven. The Church ought to have been, on the earth, an adequate witness of the ways of God, making God known; but if it has failed in this, God makes Himself known. He accomplishes Himself His objects. Verse 3: “a rainbow.” It is neither in relationship with the Church nor with the Jews, but with the creation-postdiluvian relationship.

Verse 4: “four and twenty thrones.” A throne is the royal seat of authority and government. Those four and twenty elders are kings. Here only thrones and crowns. It is not the Church as the Bride.; yet the Church is formed there. There is nothing said either of the character of priest. The main thought is a throne: we are there before a throne. These four and twenty are reigning ones (βασιλε■οντες). Verse 5: “seven lamps of fire,” which bring to light and judge what does not suit the throne. “Thunderings” mean majesty in government, manifested in a fearful manner. Verse 6: “a sea of glass” is solidified purity. One needed to be pure to be there. It is what one must be to be there. It is also the remembrance of what was done for those who are there; but it would be rather in chapter 15, that the sea might present this idea of remembrance. “Four living creatures” are the active qualities of God; they are the principles of His authority.

In the symbols, we must know how to set aside the thought of the creatures themselves, so as only to see the ideas. This is what is important in a symbol, that it is a grouping together of moral qualities by means of one being or several, thus forming a picture which gives us a complete idea of God on the thing symbolized. Thus with the Beast, it is hardly possible to understand the symmetrical arrangement of seven heads and ten horns; whereas, we understand easily seven forms of government for the Beast, and his power represented by ten kings, “Full of eyes” (verse 8) is the absolute sagacity to see everywhere. As to the cherubim, the idea that I have is, that they are the symbol of God's judicial government. God put a cherubim “to keep the way of the tree of life.” They are four heads of creation, just as one sees their classes for the earth in Gen. 2:20. They celebrate the Creator-God, the Governor of the world, the God of the Old Testament; what He is outside Christianity, consequently for the world, whether the world or Israel. The Almighty, Jehovah, the coming One, the God who is coming, as He is the God who was. At the same time these names are mentioned in one of the epistles to the Corinthians. (2 Cor. 6:18.) The God who is the Almighty, the Jehovah, would be the Father of Christians. Verse 9: it is a question of the creation here: such is the subject of chapter 4. It is the creation which gives glory to God; there is neither redemption, nor anything else. Verse 11: read, “for thy will,” for Thy good pleasure. It is God the Creator, Governor, on the throne, with all that appertains to the supreme throne. “Four and twenty” is twice the administrative perfection in man—a double testimony. “Seven” is a prime number that has no factor; this number is more abstract, and rises higher as a symbol. “Twelve” is the number which is most capable of subdivision. When it is a question of the action of man, it is always twelve.

Chapter 5, Books were then rolls. When there was much matter, they were written on within and on the back. In this one, which had seven seals, each turn was sealed at the head of the roll. Verse 5: you will always find that it is the elders who have divine intelligence; they are the explainers. We find here the Jewish power of government. “Root of David” is just to say, where the government of God is to be placed; Christ is the source of it. “Seven horns” and “seven eyes:” it is still for government, because they are “the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” There is something to learn in the history of these eyes. In 2 Chron. 16:9, they “run to and fro throughout the whole earth.” This is providence in general. In Zech. 3:9, they are on the stone laid in Jerusalem. In Zech. 4:10, these same eyes, being established in Jerusalem, “run to and fro through the whole earth;” it is a providence which originates in God's intention of putting the throne in Zion. Lastly here, in Rev. 5, before being in Zion, the eyes are in the horns of the Lamb on high. Verse 8: according to the grammatical order, it is only the elders who have harps and vials; but

one can hardly insist as to this. It is the prayers of the saints, and not of the priests; the idea is Jewish. It is as in Luke 1, at the time when Zechariah offered the incense, all the people were outside praying. Verse 9: literally, “and they sing.” Read rather, “thou hast bought [people].... Thou hast made them kings and they reign.” All scholars suppress the “us.” It is not difficult to understand, because the priests present the prayers of the saints. As to these saints on the earth, God has made them kings and priests. There was no doubt that the four and twenty elders were kings and priests; but that which was so beautiful to celebrate, was, that those suffering ones, left a little behind, were also kings and priests. There is a slight difference of reading as to “reign,” or “will reign;” for my part, I think it is rather “will reign.” The Church is there, but not alone: all the saints of the Old Testament are there also. Verse 11 and following; it is not only creation which this multitude of angels celebrate, it is also redemption. It is only the elders who say “for thou,” &c. (Ver. 9.) They have the divine intelligence which lays hold of the reason why Christ was humbled. It is the same as to the creation. (Chap. iv. 11.) Whereas, the angels merely celebrate the glory of God, without saying why God has done the things.

Chapter vi. The first four seals are the providential history of what God will do, when the moment comes to introduce the Firstborn into the world. Then, in the general government of His providence, God does certain things, by which He begins to put down man.

It is the beginning of the ways of God, when He is going to introduce His Firstborn into the world. There is, first of all, the first start, which seems an apparent victory, then all sorts of chastisements, which press upon men, without breaking them down. Verse 9: they are those who have before suffered from the hand of man. “The souls are,” as if to say, I saw them living, although they were put to death. Their souls were under the altar, as a sacrifice to God for His cause. (The same re-appears in chapter xx., where they are seen to be raised from the dead.) But it is the idea that they have been put to death. They receive white robes, to show that they are pure and approved of God. What they ask for is not resurrection, but vengeance. Verse 17: we must carefully mark that it is not God who says, “the great day of his wrath is come;” it is the frightened men who say so at that moment; but later, when the day is come, they are not frightened about it. Verses 12-17: this earthquake is not the same as in Matt. 24 At the fifth seal, after the scene of the souls under the altar, there is a certain period, not mentioned here, during which there are still some put to death. This would be the place of the great tribulation which follows the abomination standing in the holy place. (Matt. 24:15-28.) Then, at the sixth seal, a shaking, which is not yet the end; but after which come other things noticed farther on in the Apocalypse.

Chapter vii. Here again we have twelve (twelve multiplied by twelve). They are the spared ones of Israel. This is much more general. It is all the spared ones of Israel. Verses 9-17: this is the passage of the Apocalypse, which is the most difficult to class. God will help us, I trust. Here I do not find intelligence. I find still that they celebrate salvation coming from God, such as He is in His government. God (and the Lamb on the earth) is the one who spared them. It is an elder who has the intelligence of what concerns this multitude. We have seen Israel in the first part of this chapter; now we have Gentiles. I find in these saved ones neither intelligence of redemption, nor the Father, nor that joy which finds in God its happiness. They are relieved. It is an almost negative blessing. “They shall hunger no more,” &c. I find nothing here of what is characteristic for the Church. They are Gentiles, who go through the time of trial pointed out to Philadelphia. Are they in heaven or on the earth? At all events, they are before the throne, and not on thrones. Their

position is altogether inferior to that of the Church. Their religion is that of the Apocalypse; their relationship with God is according to the Apocalyptic form. They are neither in relationship with the Father, nor with the throne on the earth.

Chapter viii. In verses 3-5, the effect of intercession in this case is to bring down judgment. There is something of mystery here. The saints begin to interest themselves about this. We have much more of the imagery of the temple. “The fire of the altar,” the judgment of God which consumed Christ, is turned against the earth. That which had been a burnt-offering to God of a sweet savor becomes against man his very judgment. These are not only acts of providence, but religious dealings in connection with the worlds The Jewish principle of the relationship of God with the world. If there is evil, God will avenge it. (Psa. 20) The opening of the seals brings out the counsels of God, whilst the trumpets announce God in judgment. As there is a throne in heaven before it is established in Zion, so before there is a temple where God receives His worship, the saints on the earth are in relationship with the temple of God in heaven. Since it is a question of introducing the First-born into the world, God shows Himself more and more distinctly under a Jewish character.

In the first four trumpets the judgment is limited to the third part of the things smitten. It is all that is organized on the earth, beginning by the lowest. The sources of refreshment and the authorities are smitten completely for a third part. First trumpet—a third part of the eminent persons and all prosperity. Second trumpet—some great power, which God employs in judgment, in causing to fall into the mass of the peoples (the sea). Third trumpet—the star, some power, acting as light, which corrupts the principles of the peoples and influences for evil. It is not only human power; it is something higher (as for instance the star of Napoleon). The “rivers” represent peoples, the “waters” moral influences. The peoples moving under certain principles become the rivers. Fourth trumpet—the governmental powers are smitten: they are in darkness, at least for a third part.

Chapter ix. Now we have not only men smitten in their circumstances; but those who cling to the earth are smitten in their persons in a direct manner. Fifth trumpet—a power, especially Satanic, which comes out of the bottomless pit and finishes the corrupting of all wisdom of government. A star of heaven ought never to be on the earth. Mabomet is an instance of this. He was a man of extraordinary power to put Satan in movement and spread a moral influence, which vitiates the atmosphere one breathes. In verse 8 are “locusts.” There are agents, a whole army, which spring from this principle. Verse 6: men tormented by the devil will seek death. They will suffer in two ways, morally and physically, being prepared unto battle. There is an appearance of dignity, of royal righteousness; but when they turn round, one sees that they are subject to something (hair). At the same time they will do harm. They have the teeth of lions. God gives the name of their head in two languages, perhaps because the scene takes place in the East; and for a Hebrew he would be Abaddon, and for a Greek Apollyon. Sixth trumpet—we are in the East since the fifth trumpet, it seems to me. Here we are near the Euphrates. It is a terrible invasion. It is much more an armed attack than a moral influence (the influence of the tail so to speak); not but what there is equally that: Verse 19: the men that escape neither repent of their idolatry, nor of their wickedness. The influences of the last form of evil for the last judgments in the East, prepare themselves on every side, because Jerusalem is about to become the center.

Remark that up to the end of chapter 11 we have the general history; afterward we have that which is more specially relative to the beast and to the apostasy. Therefore it was necessary to

mark the place in the general history, and it is this we have in the parenthesis of chapters x. and xi. up to verse 13.

What we have in chapters viii. and ix. is the preparation to arrive at the last form of evil. God chastens men in order to stop them, and it would be a mercy if they would listen. One must notice, moreover, that until now it is these wicked men who are smitten, and not as yet the saints, although there may be persecutions as at all times.

Chapter x. “Clothed with a cloud” is an appearance of divine majesty. “A rainbow” is again the covenant with the creation. “His face was as it were the sun” —supreme majesty; “his feet as pillars of fire” —the firmness of judgment. He descends from heaven to take possession of the earth, by placing His feet one on the earth, the other on the sea. Verses 3, 4: “seven thunders” —the perfection of God's intervention in His judgment, answering to the voice of the angel. God keeps sealed those things which John then sees; He will not allow John to write. God allows things to be spoken, in order to show that all His power must intervene, to answer this cry of Christ; but He will only reveal what is in relationship with that which is an object of veneration in the word. Christianity, Judaism, and consequently the apostasy. With His feet, Christ takes possession of all; China, America, &c.: but it is not His will to occupy us with it here. In verse 6, read, “That there should be no longer delay.” “Little book” means not the ways of Providence in the world hidden, but the relation of the servants with what takes place in the world, the persecuted servants.

Chapter xi. This chapter is properly the summing up of the “little book,” the development of which will take place in the following chapters. “Measure:” the book takes Jewish forms here (this had not taken place before) and owns those who can really offer worship to God, or enter into the interior of the temple. The prophetic spirit, announcing that a judgment is going to take place, takes and puts the individual in relationship with God according to the principles of His government. We are in the last week, and commence the history of the things which enter into the sphere of the last prophets. Up to this, the things did not distinctly come out in this way; but now here we are in the week of Daniel. In verse 2, this measuring indicates that God owns what belongs to Him—(property is measured by a line). In Matt. 24 the Lord leaves everything vague until the last half week, at least as to the period. It is from the time of the abomination in the holy place that all is determined. For the last half week, there is nothing doubtful to my mind. Zech. 10; 14; chapter 10 gives the last attack, and chapter 14 the first. It is evident enough to me that, the first time, Jerusalem is taken, and that, the second time, the Lord being there and the remnant in force, the enemies do not succeed. Verse 4: the two witnesses stand before the God, not of heaven but of all the earth. It is not a candlestick before the Lord of the earth; it is an adequate testimony to the state of Israel according to God— “two witnesses.” God will also be in the midst of the remnant, without owning the people. In Zechariah we see everything in order. There is a candlestick and two olive trees, which furnish oil for the candlestick. Here it is two candlesticks and two olive trees. How can you arrange them so as to make a whole? In the “two,” I do not go beyond the idea that it is an adequate testimony. Verses 5, 6: we find again here the power of Elias and of Moses. It is the proof that God takes up anew His relationships with His people, but in a sovereign manner, by means of the prophets as of old, when they were in Egypt or separated from the temple, as in the time of Elijah. This is always what God does when His people are in disorder and He returns to His relationship with them. One sees again here that His relationships with His people are at the same time relationships and non-relationships, because nothing is in order (a proof by the way, that the

first half week is viewed vaguely and might well belong at the same time both to the mission of Jesus and to the testimony of the end until the abomination of the desolation). The witnesses shut the heavens; they have authority over the waters and over the earth. The three things which we have seen to be objects of the judgment (chap. viii.) are now in their power. Verse 7: it is not only that the holy city is trodden under foot, but, besides that, Satan destroys the testimony of God on the earth. All then is in the hands of the wicked one. Verse 8: read “the great street of the city.” “The city” is not Babylon, but Jerusalem. Verse 10: what ferocious joy of man, when they had put to death the witnesses of God! “They that dwell upon the earth” are those who are settled there, morally as well as otherwise. Verses 11—13: we see that after their testimony there is a series of events. Verse 13: there is extreme fear; but they had not received the testimony, for they give glory to the God of heaven. Here the sixth trumpet is finished. It goes up to the death of the two witnesses.

The seventh trumpet is probably the end of the last half week. There is nothing said here of what happens; only, when it has sounded, they celebrate in heaven the victory, because the trumpet has sounded for the end. (Chap. 10:7.) Chapter 11 terminates the Apocalypse; for in the seventh trumpet they celebrate the result of all, up to the judgment of the dead and the everlasting kingdom.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 202

On Revelation: Part 2

concluded from page 55

In chapter 11 the prophet makes the beast to ascend out of the bottomless pit without developing its history. Now be begins afresh, and although it is a fresh taking up of the thing, at the same time it is, as it were, the sequel. Having given the history of the world in general, he reserved the beast for a particular history; but when he comes to that, he takes his sources in heaven (Satan).

It will be noticed that chapters xii. - xiv. go together. In chapter xii., we have the great elements, the bringing on the scene the principal actors, and all that relates directly to the power of Satan; in chapter 13 the instruments of that power in the world. Chapter 14 gives the ways of God, who intervenes in the midst of all that.

Chapter 12:1: “clothed with the sun” is with supreme power. Verse 10: it is the beginning of the kingdom—not that it is yet established on the earth; but because he who hinders is cast out from heaven. His power, although not yet destroyed, is thrown into a more limited circle. It is no longer an influence from heaven. Satan on the earth is obliged to show himself such as he is. As long as he is in heaven, he can exercise a deceitful influence; once upon the earth, he is obliged to unmask himself. “Our brethren” are those who on earth were yet aspiring to heaven. The Church is already in heaven. Chapter xiii. Here we are in history. The beast rises out of the sea, not out of the bottomless pit, because it is a question of the history of the instruments, and not of the sources of power. It resembles the characters of the first three beasts of Dan. 7; and it is the fourth. It is (ver. 8) a resurrection beast; it is important to notice this, in order to recognize it. Verse 5: “continue forty and two months;” God will permit him to act during that time. It always seems to me that the “little horn” of Dan. 7 resembles much more this first beast, than the second. Verse 8: “All that dwell upon the earth;” one must always distinguish them in this moral character of being settled down here, in contrast with those who by faith belong to heaven. Verse 10: God will not have force and violence; He will have the patience of faith.

Verse 11: “Another beast.” Christianity is not the Lamb; for the Lamb is Christ personally. I have an idea that it is a power of the earth, a power which rises up from among the Jews, when all is organized, when the first beast is already there. The word “earth” is one to which one must pay great attention, in order to have the interpretation, because in Hebrew and in Greek it means the organized earth, or else Judea. See this second case in Isa. 24

It had “two horns” so as to resemble “a lamb.” For my part, I think that it is a false Christ in Judea, who will be the Messiah of the Jews and the agent of the Roman empire to persuade the Jews to submit to the beast. Verse 13: here he is acting as a prophet, and giving signs or wonders, as proof that he is sent by Jehovah. Is it not said in 2 Thess. 2 that he owns no God? The answer is, “Yes;” but the difficulty is completely removed by the testimony of Dan. 11, where we see that he does not “regard any god,” while at the same time be honors his god Mauzzim. Outwardly before the Jews, he will have a god; inwardly, he has none. In 2 Thess. 2 it is, to my mind, religious and

moral.

Chapter 14 is the intervention of God in the midst of all these things. “An hundred forty and four thousand” are those who have suffered with Christ from the hands of the wicked Jews, like the remnant with David. Before the temple is built, the true David reigns in Zion, and those who have suffered with Him, reign with Him. They have a share in royal grace. They are not in heaven; but they sing the song of heaven. I do not know whether they are raised from the dead or changed. There are seven things in this chapter—verse 1, first; verse 6, second; verse 8, third; verse 9, fourth; verse 13, fifth; verse 14, sixth; and verse 17, seventh.

In the fifth section—the time when one ceases to be put to death for the Lord—it is “the dead,” particularly their character—the diers, so to speak. This is the close of martyrdom. The diers in the Lord are blessed from that moment: they enter into the blessing which they have been waiting for. Hence it is finished—nothing remains but the coming of the Son of man. They are blessed from this time. I do not say that they die from henceforth. In the sixth it is the harvest or judgment where distinction is made; in the ninth, the vintage, where everything is trodden down. At His coming, He smites everywhere; but where all has not been against Him (“the isles"), He distinguishes, whilst in Edom, where the gathering together of the wicked ones takes place, all is trodden down.

Chapters 15 & 16 are altogether separate. It is the wrath of God. This is not the same as the wrath of the Lamb. It is God acting in public government, and not Christ executing judgment in person. At the same time, it is unmingled judgment, because the saints who suffered under the beast are not ingathered and in glory.

Chapter 16 is the vials. We have here, as for the trumpets, the earth, the sea, the rivers, the sun. Fourth vial: the sun becomes more scorching. Men would have this beast: they must know what it is. Sixth vial: the Euphrates. All the sources of prosperity are smitten. Verses 12, 13: the plagues fall upon the men who worship the beast and did not repent. Now the sixth vial prepares the last great catastrophe. Verse 13: “the dragon” is the open energy and hostility of Satan; “the beast” is the Roman Empire in its state of blasphemy, having again come up out of the bottomless pit; and “the false prophet” is he who pretended to be the sent one of God. In verse 16, we find ourselves again with Hebrew landmarks—Armageddon. It is, as in Judg. 5, the gathering together of the kings to make war against God. Verses 17, 18: “into the air;” because it is universal. What a solemn word— “It is done.” We have not yet the judgment of the beast. Up to this, it is only what happens around; the judgment of the beast is another thing. “The earth” is where they have not received “the love of the truth,” then God sends them “strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.” They unite with the rebellion of men under the government of God, and undergo direct judgment. They are smitten alive; whereas, “the nations,” where Christianity has not had its seat, undergo the judgment in a less terrible manner. The Apocalypse brings us to the point where the apostasy of the Church has led the world; it is an apostate concentration. It ends in this way on the earth. On the other hand, this book shows us also the end of all things for good by the rapture of the saints to heaven. To sum it all up, blessing is on high, judgment below.

Chapters 17 & 18. It is not the beast in its particular history, but, now, its relationship with the harlot.

Chapter 17:1: “upon many waters” means by the side of the waters. She has direct power over the beast, and her influence extends even over nations. Verse 3: for the Spirit, this world is a wilderness. The beast has the royal color, but the harlot is much more adorned. Verse 5: “abominations of the earth,” or idols. It is a mystery; it is not a clear thing, as if it were a city. If there were Nebuchadnezzar at Babylon, it would not be a mystery. One must seek here one or more characters. She is the cause of every persecution and of all the blood which has been shed. Verse 8: the beast re-appears with a diabolical character. Verse 9: “mountains” are seats of authority in stability. Verse 11: this eighth king is the beast itself; but it is, at the same time, one of the old forms which reappears (consuls, decemvirs, emperors—one knows not what; but it is “of the seven.") Verse 12: “they reign for the same time with the beast. The ten horns belong to the beast; they are not the barbarians of the middle ages. Verse 17 means the horns, which destroy the harlot, not the kings of the earth,” for they lament. (Chap. xviii. 9.) We have here the end of Christendom; Christianity had ceased before this. These horns are indeed kings; but they are powers and kings at the same time. If the king falls, the power—the people—is always there.

Chapter 18 verses 4-6. Two things are said to the saints: first, to come out of Babylon in order not to partake of her sins, nor of her judgment; secondly to smite her. This warning, though placed in the account after the judgment of Babel, is addressed to the saints before the judgment.

Chapter 19:10. We must distinguish the prophetic Spirit from the Spirit sent from heaven. In the first case, it is the Spirit who declares things beforehand; in the second, it is the Spirit given after a work accomplished in redemption, as a seal of that work. This is important to distinguish, because the testimony of Jesus is not always the gospel.

From verse 11 to chapter 20:3, is the warrior judgment. What follows is rather the sessional judgment. Verse 11: the armies which accompany Him are the saints. (Chap. 17:14.) As to “heaven opened,” it is interesting to remark that, until Christ, heaven could not be opened. We find four times heaven opened in the New Testament. First, at the time of the baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:21, 22); secondly, during the days of the Son of man, according to John 1:51 (this will be fully accomplished in the millennium; but already on the earth, His person called for that, Luke 22:43); thirdly, at the death of Stephen, for the reception on high of the redeemed man; fourthly, in judgment (Apocalypse 19.). Verse 15: “Out of his mouth;” “The word that I have spoken” to you, “the same shall judge,” &c. Verse 10, those are the two which go first into the lake of fire. Others will be cast in somewhat later. (Matt. 25)

Chapter 20. As for Satan, he is cast into the bottomless pit, because he is again to come out and deceive the nations afresh. In verse 4, besides the general expression, which says that they are on thrones, there are two classes named. Otherwise it might have been feared that these persons, those of the last half week, the last raised from the dead, would not be found with the others; they are introduced here, in order that we may see their place. Christ, who comes like lightning, does not pass away like lightning. He sits down to judge. In verses 7-9, it is to be remarked that the saints do not suffer; there is a complete separation. That which belongs to God is gathered to the Lord who is there; but when “the camp of the saints” is surrounded, fire comes down out of heaven. Verse 10: Satan, once cast down, never goes up again to heaven. In verse 11, “I saw a great white throne:” it is always sessional; but Christ is alone. There are no other thrones here, because it is a question of the dead; we shall not judge the dead. One must, moreover, pay

attention to this, that Christ does not come for the judgment of the dead. He is already there, when the moment arrives. Verse 13. This is to say, that all the rest of the dead were there.

Chapter 21:1-8. These verses continue the history. The Lamb is not named in these eight verses; it is not a mediatorial system. It is God “all in all.”

In chapter 21:9, we go back a little. It is one of the seven angels who shows the New Jerusalem to John. This remark may show that we have not here a continuation of the history. There is also the contrast of the two cities. It needs a measure of spirituality to lay hold of the figures here. The city descended out of heaven; the origin of the Church is heavenly. It is always twelve, because it is always a question of men, though it be in glory. “Gold” is divine righteousness. One sees the meaning of this symbol by the mercy-seat of gold which received the blood. As to “precious stones,” I do not know whether I could explain more than the light of God diversified in His saints; as, for instance, the light of the sun in a prism. God is light and the Church is the perfect prism, in which the light of God brings out in detail all the beauties of His glory. I find this varied expression of the perfection of God, first, in the creature (in creation); secondly, in Christ, in the priesthood; thirdly, in glory for the Church. It is God's essential perfection, not manifesting itself essentially; but in a center which shows its various beauties. All these figures furnish us with real ideas, which it is good to lay hold of. This is made very evident by the fact, that this varied glory has its history in creation, in grace, and in glory. The “gates” are twelve pearls; the beauty of the Church appears directly. There was no temple therein; God is the temple of it; His proper glory insures His majesty. The city has God Himself for its light; but the city is itself the light of the nations. (Ver. 23, 24.) In verse 26, they bring their gifts “to” it and not “into” it. Instead of each one worshipping his net (Hab. 1:16), they will own the God of glory, honoring Him and presenting to Him their gifts (in His city on this earth), as of old they offered oblations to Jehovah before His altar on the earth.

Chapter 22:3. All the ripe fruit which the life of Christ produces we eat of in heaven: all that is manifested (the leaves) will be administered in grace and healing on the earth. On the earth now, the Church should be the manifestation of all this glory.

In this chapter there are three times, “I come quickly.” Verse 7 is a warning for those who are in connection with the things said in this book—those who are found in the circumstances to which the prophecy applies. Verse 12. This is much more general; the consequence will be universal. In verse 16, Jesus no longer prophesies; He introduces Himself afresh. Then as soon as He announces Himself in His character for the Church, viz., His person and His coming, the cry of the bride is— “Come.” This (ver. 17) is the complete picture of the Church in the absence of Christ. Four things are there: first, the Holy Ghost; secondly, the waiting for Christ, knowing what He is for it; thirdly, some weak ones, who have not yet entered into the affections of the bride, but at the same time belonging to Christ, and therefore invited to join their voices to its own. Fourthly and lastly, the Church, the depositary of living waters, possessing the Holy Spirit in the absence of Christ, invites those from without to come and quench their thirst.

(Concluded from page 55)

Chapter 203

Outline of Revelation

Let us look a little at the different forms of evil in connection with the Revelation.

When we go beyond the seven churches, we find the government of the world, but we see the government put into the hands of the Lamb that was slain. The book, we know, is divided. into three parts. (Chap. 1:19.) First, “The things which thou hast seen,” that is, the personal glory of Christ; not merely in His divinity, nor His humanity, but in the character of judgment, as seen in chapter 1. Secondly, “The things which are” —the seven churches—His judgment of the seven churches as given in chapters 2 and 3. Thirdly, “The things which shall be hereafter” (or, after these). There we see God's judgment and government of the world.

The seven churches then existing are looked at as those which Christ judges, though they present to us the whole history of the Church until the coming of the Lord. They are thus given that there might be nothing to hinder their looking for the immediate coming of the Lord. It is the same in Matt. 25 The virgins who go to sleep are the same that wake; and the servants who receive the talents are the same the Lord reckons with at His coming, though ages and generations have passed away from the time of the Church going to sleep and the time of the going forth of the cry, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh.” When the Spirit of God speaks of the Bridegroom tarrying, He speaks of the present state of things existing unto the end. We see seven subsisting churches, and there is no form of evil can come in that is not provided for. In Jerusalem was found the blood of all the prophets. In Babylon (chap. xvii.) the blood of all the saints. We at the close have all the responsibility. The vision and the blessing was from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come. “Which is” is the immutable being of God. Thus time is brought in in connection with Him who is eternal—the coming One—which is, was, and is coming.

In chapter 1 we find the divine attributes in One who is man. There is a full description of the Lord Jesus, not as girded for priestly service, but “clothed with a garment down to his foot:” here it is priestly judgment. The “golden girdle” divine righteousness. “His head and his hairs were white like wool,” the Ancient of days. (Dan. 7:9.) “His eyes a flame of fire” is divine unsparing scrutiny; “His feet like unto fine brass,” earthly judgment; “His voice as the sound of many waters,” His majesty; “His countenance as the sun,” supreme light; “The first and the last,” Jehovah; “He that liveth and was dead,” the risen man. We see Him with certain divine attributes and executing judgment as the Son of man. There is something similar in chapters 7 and 10 of Daniel. You get Him as Jehovah, and as One risen from the dead, as the risen man walking among the candlesticks.

In chapter iv. we see a throne set in heaven, and the four living creatures surrounding it. The throne of Dan. 7 is a partial development; but it is not simply the throne in that character here. We have cherubim as well as seraphim. What is the difference? The cherubim are connected with present judgment on the earth; they are the seat of God's judicial power on earth. The seraphim covered their faces, crying, “Holy, holy, holy.” They are connected with God revealed, so as to bring man as man into His presence. In Isa. 6 we find the seraphim. Here we see government in respect to the holiness of God's nature, not so much His revealed ways. God comes out according

to His nature. Anything not according to that nature I cannot have. We find the incompatibility of God's nature with sin—the contrariety of an unholy nature with a holy Being. The living creatures (Revelation) are cherubim, the attributes of God and the heads of creation—cattle, beasts of the field, birds, and man. The lion was the symbol of strength; the calf, firmness; man, intelligence; the eagle, swiftness of judgment. The cherubim in Isa. 6 have nothing to do with grace, only with judgment. The coal of fire is grace, but burning grace. Cherubim are the government of God on earth; seraphim cry, “Holy, holy, holy.” The living creatures (Revelation) illustrate the cherubic character; Holy, holy, holy, the seraphic character; the seven Spirits of God, the attributive character. The seven lamps are the seven Spirits; they are in connection with God's government of the earth, and similar to Isa. 11, “the spirit of wisdom,” &c. The rainbow (verse 3) is God's covenant with creation. You find judgment, but not yet the Lord till the next chapter. The living creatures in Ezek. 1 are the attributes of God, the pillars of the throne. “The Lord reigneth; he sitteth between the cherubims.” (Psa. 99:1.) Man made gods of the attributes to worship.

In chapter v. the angels are seen as a distinct set outside. In chapter iv. are no angels at all—the living creatures may be angels; in chapter 5 they are the heavenly saints. We perhaps get here the transfer of power from angels to men, according to Heb. 2. The coming age is not to be under angels, but under man. The Lamb's taking the book is the beginning in a certain way of the coming age. All through the old dispensation God was dealing with man through angels— “the law was given by the disposition of angels;” now they are displaced by man, their power transferred to the heavenly saints. The four living creatures are only used as symbols, just as the beast of chapter xvii. has seven heads and ten horns; if taken literally, where would you put the ten horns on the seven heads? They have tried to put them in pictures, and they have made a mess of it.

The beasts and elders worship together. The beasts celebrate, but do not worship. You see the beasts and elders separate in chapter 4 The angels never give a reason for their worship; the saints always do, for they have the mind and thoughts of God. Theirs is an intelligent, a “reasonable service.”

God has been pleased to use certain agents according to these attributes of which the beasts are the symbols. He has used angels, He will use saints. Earthly saints will not reign over the earth, they are reigned over—a royal nation in a certain sense. The beasts have more the governmental character, the elders are worshippers. Both represent the Church in chap. v.; they may perhaps include the Old Testament saints too. The elders are characterized by their intelligence in the mind of God. In chapter v. 10 the words us and we should be them and they—it refers to the remnant. Their song mentions the two classes—themselves the heavenly saints, and the remnant. “Redeemed us,” “made them.” He is worthy, for He has redeemed us. It is not here so much His character as the Redeemer making atonement that is seen, but rather what we find in Phil. 2—the humbled man set upon the throne—the effect of His death for Him, and not for vs. Through death He got into this place. It is His title to take the government of the earth.

Verse 6. The seven horns and the seven eyes represent the perfection of power and the perfection of intelligence. The “eyes” are the exercise of divine intelligence in the government of the earth. (See 2 Chron. 16:9: Zech. 4:10.) In the lion (ver. 5) we have the symbol of power, in the lamb (ver. 6) of redemption, in the seven spirits we get the Holy Ghost as governing. They are sent out into all the earth, the divine perfection of government in the earth. The eyes in chap. iv. are all seeing;

in chap. v. perfection in government; in chapter iv. 8 internal spiritual perception; in chapter v. all is looked at as in order, both in the heavens and the earth, the effect of the Lamb's taking the book. There is no reign in chapter iv. The Church has the spiritual intelligence now which is necessary to the government of the earth, but is not yet in the place to exercise the power. We have an unction from the Holy One and know all things. You cannot go beyond that. We do not need any fresh endowment. Of course there is the new body and the glory which we have not got. The body belongs to the first creation. I belong to the new creation. The Church will have no more power of discernment in the glory than now. The perfect thing is not yet come. (1 Cor. 13) There are always the two things (for instance, in John, we have everlasting life as a present possession; in Rom. 6:22, “the end everlasting life"). So in Romans we have justification and righteousness as a present thing, whilst in Phil. 3 it is something future. This is because, although we belong to the new creation, we are still in the old as to the body. As regards the new man, it realizes everything in heaven. As to our body, we realize that we are groaning on earth. They are priests in chapter v., but not acting in chapter iv. That is preparatory, a sort of program to the soul of all the things that were to come out after. The throne is set but not yet acting. God's holiness is celebrated. You have the throne set in heaven, not in Jerusalem. God is seen in heaven and directly I see the character of things in Him. When Christ comes to the world, He comes as God, not as the Messiah. In the first three gospels He comes as Messiah, presenting Himself to man's responsibility. They are summed up in John 1:11 “He came unto his own and his own received him not.” Then in John we have Him as God manifest in flesh. The Son came to reveal the Father. So we find John full of election. We have the character of John's gospel in that verse, “I came forth from the Father and am come into the world.” (Chap. 16:28.) If He comes as God, He must necessarily come to the world as the sphere of His acting, not to the Jews only. “I came into the world.” He leaves the world and goes to the Father. Whenever you put an interpretation upon a scripture, you go wrong. One of the old fathers has well said, “He reads the scriptures well who brings back a sense from it, but does not take one to it.” In chapter iv. the elders are the administrative power by which the attributes of God are displayed. In Rev. 6, at the opening of the fifth seal, we find the souls of martyrs under the altar. They cry for judgment, not rest. Then as the answer to their prayer we have a mighty shaking at the opening of the sixth seal, so that the kings, the great men, &c., think in their terror that the end is come (but they are mistaken).

Chapter 7. Before the other judgments are poured out, the Lord takes care to number His people. We have in this chapter God's people on earth: first the Jews, then the Gentiles. These are those who go through the tribulation. They are the results of the everlasting gospel going out to the Gentiles after the Church has been taken up. These saints after the Church is gone are living in earthly circumstances and have the highest kind of comfort you can have. These saints are in a better case than the millennial ones, but not in so good a one as the elder saints. Saints have so got down to earth in their hopes that they have taken this as belonging to them, thanking God that He is coming down to them to wipe away their tears instead of rising up to God beyond the place where tears are. The Church is up in heaven. Where does this multitude come from? They are those who are living on the earth, for they serve God day and night in His temple, whilst in the New Jerusalem there is no temple. The everlasting gospel bears something of the character of John the Baptist's. Connected with judgment, they are warned. The number of the Jews here (one hundred and forty-four thousand) is a mystic number—it is that of human perfection—a thousand times over of each tribe (seven the highest indivisible number, perfection in unity, God's perfect number;

twelve is the lowest number divisible by four different numbers). We find these Jews in Matt. 25 spoken of as the Lord's brethren. We have the heavenly saints in the same chapter as the virgins and the servants. These are not altogether the same as the one hundred and forty-four thousand of chapter xiv. Some of them are killed during the tribulation and get their places in heaven. White robes—token of acceptance and righteousness—are given to the slain remnant. The Gentiles seen in chapter vii. are those who have gone through the tribulation and therefore have a higher place of blessing than those born during the millennium. The great tribulation is not the same as Jacob's trial: the former is connected with the whole earth, whilst the latter only applies to Israel. They may be going on at the same time.

We may just look at the connection of Psa. 93-100 with this period. Psa. 93, the Lord reigneth—general idea; 94, the cry of the remnant of Israel and the question asked, Is He going to have the throne together with antichrist? (ver. 20); 95., the last summons to Israel; 96., the everlasting gospel to the heathen; 97., He is actually coming; 98, He is come; 99, He is sitting between the cherubim; 100., all the Gentiles, the nations, are summoned to come up and worship. Here we get what the reign of Solomon is a type of.

Chapter 8. Here we find the answers to the prayers of the saints (chap. 6:10), the angel having given efficacy to their prayers by offering them up with incense on the golden altar before the throne and now the judgments are poured out. The angel here is Christ. When the heavenly saints act as priests, they do not pray at all. (Chap. 5:8, 9.) When Christ is the priest as here, He adds incense to the prayers. In chapter v. the prayers are the incense. At the opening of the seventh seal we see more special judgments. First, there is silence, a lull after the terrible sixth and no action. Then we come to the trumpets. In chapter 8 are the first four judgments, and these are more specially on states and circumstances (they are the western judgments); in chapter 9 the fifth and sixth trumpets, which are specially upon man, people are attacked; these are the eastern judgments, the third part of man being slain. The fifth falls on the apostate Jews who had not the seal of God on their foreheads (chap. 9:4). It is the wrath of God here that is poured out, not that of the Lamb. God is about to bring the Only-begotten into the world again, and in these chapters He is clearing the ground. His title as the slain Lamb is owned in chapter v. but we do not get His acting in judgment till we come to chapter 19. The action here is all angelic.

Chapters 10 and 11 are parenthetical; 12, 13, 14 are connected; 15 - 18 form an appendix. The whole book closes at chapter 11:18. It brings us down to the judgment of the dead, at the end of the millennium, which you get more fully gone into in chapter 20. The last verse of chapter 11 belongs to chapter 12. It goes on beyond the millennium into the eternal state. Then follows an appendix, chapters going more into detail right on to the final scene in the last two chapters. In chapter 10 you again find Christ under the figure of an angel. Before the sounding of the last trumpet, He brings in a little book which unfolds all the rest. (Chap. 11.) In chapter 10:6, “that there should be time no longer” —the real force of the word here is “that there should be no more delay,” but the mystery of God should be finished at the sounding of the seventh angel.

Chapter 11:2. The holy city is trodden under foot of the Gentiles forty-two months. This is the second half of the last of the seventy weeks of Daniel. We only find the last half of the week spoken of in Revelation. The whole week is spoken of in Dan. 9:24-27. First, you have seven weeks; these were historical; then sixty-two weeks are added, bringing us “unto Messiah the

Prince." "After these things [it does not say how long] Messiah is cut off." The first half of the remaining week we find is the ministry of Christ which lasted three years and a half. Then the Messiah is cut off. So now to faith there is only the last half of the week to come. But the apostate nation, not owning the period of Christ's ministry, "confirms the covenant" with Antichrist for the whole week. They go on flourishing till the middle of the week. Then Antichrist breaks his covenant with them, and their judgment follows, and Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles for "forty and two months." They refused Him who came in His Father's name, and will receive him who comes in his own name. In Dan. 7:25, it is the times and laws, and not the saints, that are given into his hand. In the first book of Psalms we see the experience of the remnant during the first half week, and that is why we find more of the experience of the Lord Jesus here than in all the other Psalms. In the half week of the Lord's ministry the remnant received Him, the nation did not: When under Antichrist, the nation again go through the first half week, it will be the converse, the nation receive him and the remnant do not. In the gospels by Matthew and Mark we have only the last tribulation, whilst in Luke is also seen the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Luke says nothing of the abomination of desolation set up. We find from Rev. 11:1-3 that true worship and true testimony are maintained during the whole of this time of one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Time is never counted except in connection with the Jews. The Church belongs to heaven, and time is not reckoned in connection with it. There is no date mentioned in Revelation till you come to the last half week (ver. 9, probably literal days). When the Church is caught up there will be apostasy. We see in 2 Thess. 2, that those who received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, are given up to believe a lie. So to children, it is the same thing whether Christ comes, or does not come; if the truth is rejected, they die in their sins. Rev. 11 takes us on to the last scene of judgment—that of the dead, which takes place after the millennium: this finishes the book. Thus the beast, Babylon, and then the appendix (chapters 11:19, and 12, 13, 14.) go together.

You are in the dark place, but you have the Lord's candle, namely, prophecy, and you do well to take heed to it.

In chapter xi. 19 we see the ark of God's testament in His temple. Come what may, there is security for Israel. He has given a heavenly security to the covenant on earth. The word of prophecy is not to draw but to drive us out of the world. The best thing is to have a heavenly Christ to draw us out, but it is good to have the word of prophecy to let us know what is coming on the world.

The Church is not spoken of here (chap. 13); she forms the body of the one new man, the man-child caught up to God and His throne. The woman includes all the twelve tribes clothed with supreme authority, and complete government about her head. Seven is the highest indivisible number, twelve the most divisible number (a circle and a cube). The man-child is taken up to God and His throne, the woman is left to persecution. James addresses all the twelve tribes, though ten seem to have been lost sight of.

In chapter 13 we get the instruments of Satan: the Roman beast in his last form, and the second beast, which I believe to be Antichrist. In chapter 12 we had an anti-priest, "the accuser of our brethren, which accused them before our God day and night." In chapter 13 we see an anti-king and anti-prophet. The true King and Prophet was rejected: so now they get a false king and a false prophet. He takes these two earthly characters, now he can no longer exercise the former.

In chapter 14 we get the result of God's dealings during this period—one hundred and forty-four thousand associated with Christ on earth. It is “His Father,” never the Father relating to the saints. They are associated with Christ in His royal place upon earth. They are those who have been specially faithful; they learn the heavenly song though they are not in heaven, and they have His comfort. They have shared Christ's rejection, and now they have a place of special blessing. Special blessing is always the result of special sorrow. They are the firstfruits for God and the Lamb on the earth, as we are the firstfruits for heaven. It is too late to go to heaven unless they are killed. They learn the song that is sung there, and accompany Him in His rejection. Whoever belongs to Him out of all the nations you find in chapter 7.

Chapters 15, 16. Now we come to a new wonder. The others in chapter 14 end with the winepress of the wrath of God. Chapter 15 begins before the end of chapter 14. There are seven different testimonies in chapter 14. Corruption is centered in Babylon, power in the beast. God destroys Babylon, not the Lamb.

An inward quickening is never treated of in scripture as salvation the idea of manifestation has been lost. Cornelius was quickened beyond a doubt, but was told to send for Peter to hear “words whereby he might be saved.” We get the two things in Rom. 10— “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Salvation is here the result not merely of believing but also of confessing. Peter, in Acts 2, exhorts those who were pricked to the heart by the word spoken, to “save” themselves from that untoward generation. Lydia was a worshipper of God before the visit of Paul to Philippi. Salvation is not the Holy Ghost's work, but the work of Christ. I cannot say a man is saved unless his conscience is purged. The Church has lost the thought of being saved. People think it is enough to be born anew. Regeneration is confounded with having life. If we look at Israel, they are not spoken of as saved till they were across the Red Sea. Salvation is connected with actual deliverance. When the blood was on the doorpost, they were free from the judgment. There God was known as a Judge; as a Savior at the Red Sea— “Stand still and see the salvation of God.”

In result, salvation always includes the body. “Believe—be saved.” Ephesians “By grace are ye saved.” I should say a quickened soul was safe but not saved. Israel was safe under the shelter of the blood, though they had not then seen “the salvation of God” —full deliverance from Egypt. A man has not to be saved unless he is lost. You could not say in that sense, that a Jew, before the rejection of Christ, was totally lost; that is, he was under probation. It is no longer now that a man is in a probationary state. He is not only a sinner, but the cross of Christ proves him to be totally lost. Man thus proved to be lost is in a position to be totally saved” delivered from this present evil world.” I was in the flesh, but now I am in Christ. If a soul were only quickened and not saved, he would not belong to the Church at the coming of the Lord. I know that is impossible, because, as the apostle says, “He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.” You are not united by faith, or by life, but by the Holy Ghost. “In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.” (Eph. 1) People are now taught to hope that they have life. I meet two different persons, and I ask both whether they are the children of God. I get the same reply from each, “I hope so;” but if I hear them at their prayers, I find there the different state of their souls. Whilst one, having the Spirit of adoption, is crying “Abba, Father,” the language of the other is “Lord, have mercy.”

“Regeneration,” as the word is used in the New Testament, is not the same as being born again. The word is only used twice: Matt. 19, where it is in connection with the millennium: and in Titus 3, with baptism. It is more connected with salvation than quickening. A desire after holiness would be one evidence of a quickened soul. I do not say he is saved; scripture does not say so. If one has been set free, one never gets into uncertainty. “Forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” is speaking of practice. For instance, my child runs out in the street and gets dirty, and I say to him, “You have forgotten that I washed you just before you went out.” A person may be very clear and have little godliness. I would far rather see a person in real distress of soul, as in Rom. 7, than knowing themselves saved, and taking it cool without any exercise of conscience. It is not till after Israel had passed the Red Sea and seen the salvation of God, that we get the song of deliverance. What is the meaning of the word of the Lord to Zaccheus “This day is salvation come to this house?” Christ was Himself the salvation of God. As Simeon says, “mine eyes have seen thy salvation,” Zaccheus now receives Him joyfully. He had been full of his good works before, giving half of his goods to the poor, &c.; he was just telling the Savior what he was doing before. Jesus seeks and saves the lost.

In chapter xvii., we have Babylon and the two beasts. Chapter xviii., the judgment of Babylon, “in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all that were slain on the earth.” She is corrupt religion, most hateful to God, like Jerusalem whom the Lord held guilty in His day of all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from Abel downward. Chapter xix. The marriage of the Lamb comes after the judgment of Babylon. Here we have not God destroying corruption, but the Lamb Himself taking the power. In chapters 20 - 21:5, is seen the final scene till, according to 1 Cor. 15, “God is all in all.” Chapter 21:8 entirely closes the history of the book.

A description follows (from chap. 21:9) of the New Jerusalem; then warnings. In the end we get again the relationship of the Church to Christ, as at the beginning of chapter 1. At the presentation of Himself, she says, “Unto him that loved us,” &c. Here, in chapter 22:16, He presents Himself as the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star. The bride immediately with the Spirit answers, Come. We have three invitations in this verse: first, as to the Bridegroom, she invites Him to come; second, she turns to the other saints—those who have heard and received the word are invited to join in the cry, and say, “come;” third, she turns to the world and invites the thirsty to come and drink freely of the water of life. We see the bride under different names, the assembly and the body in Ephesians; and holy city, and the new and holy Jerusalem in Rev. 21. Were Abraham, &c., not in the Church? Some think they may be of the city, but not of the body. Would you make a third sphere then for the Old Testament saints? There may be twenty spheres. Look at Heb. 12:22- 24. There we see several spheres. First, we are “come unto Mount Zion” (that is, the hundred and forty four thousand in the land (Rev. 14)—here we have royal grace upon earth); secondly, AND unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; thirdly, AND to an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly; fourthly, AND to the church of the first-born which are written in heaven; fifthly, AND to God the Judge of all; sixthly, AND to the spirits of just men made perfect (that is, the Old Testament saints, Heb. 11:40); seventhly, AND to Jesus the mediator, &c.; eighthly, and to the blood, &c. You find out the different divisions by noticing where the word AND is used. We have the ascending scale, then the descending. He begins with earth and goes higher and higher till he arrives at God the Judge of all at the top, and then descends to earth again. The blood of sprinkling is connected with the new covenant of God

and the earth. I suppose they (Abraham, &c.) looked for the blessing that accompanied that state of things. Having got nothing on earth, he looked up for the eternal city.

Chapter 204

Review

Vestiarium Christianum. The origin and gradual development of the dress of holy ministry in the Church. By the Revelation Wharton B. Marriott, M.A., F.S.A., care. London: Rivington, Waterloo Place. 1868.

MR. Marriott's book is tolerably conclusive that the ecclesiastical dress of the first four centuries was simply the better clothing of everyday life; and that, though modified afterward during the revolutionary crisis which followed, it was not for centuries even then that an adoption more or less of Aaronic vesture became systematized.

It is the natural inference from this that those are most in the spirit of ancient practice (by which is meant not medieval nor yet patristic, but apostolic practice) who appear in the assembly of God now in the decent costume of the day and country in which they live; and that the adoption of any peculiar dress is a poor imitation of other times without the smallest right, reason, or divine authority. The Roman toga has certainly no higher claim than the Greek gallium or ιμ■τιον. Yet they were quite distinct and characteristic, though alike expressive of leisure and a grave occasion. Naturally in the east, at least in Asia Minor, Palestine, &c., the Greek dress prevailed, as in the west the Roman.

The deduction of chief weight is inevitable that, during the time when the Church was founded, and for a long while after, those who ministered in holy things wore no distinctive dress, like the priests of Israel or of the heathen. When Christendom fell into their ways, they took up a special habit for sacred ministrations, and to this end retained substantially in the west the Roman dress (when barbarian influence brought in a change for their classes of society), even to the ornaments which used to distinguish knights, senators, and official personages. But it is certain that white dresses were in no way distinctive of priesthood among the nations; so that, supposing that even this could be traced up to apostolic times (which is far from being proved), it would argue nothing sacerdotal, but rather the contrary.

Mr. M. assigns as a reason why white garments, while regarded as specially appropriate to religious solemnity of all kinds, were not in heathen idea viewed as the insignia of the higher official priesthoods, that white dress was or might be worn by all, and therefore some distinctive dress was required when the object was to mark out one or another as the possessor of any special hierarchical dignity. The glowing colors of the Ritualists were heathen and denounced by the most superstitious of the fathers as fit only for women without modesty and men without manhood: and this even in private life. That such would be worn by professing Christians in the worship of the Lord did not even cross their minds.

And this leads us to the practical part of the subject, and the true key to apostolic procedure and New Testament practice. The only priesthood for us recognized in Christianity is that of our blessed Lord, and this carried on in heaven. “For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law.” (Heb. 8) Hence the extreme

inaccuracy, and indeed error, of Mr. Marriott's note to p. 39. Apart from Judaism (which includes his a, /3, 7), ■ερε■ς, belongs (in its full sense of representation for the Christians in the presence of God) to our Lord Jesus only, as now glorified and interceding on high. The only other sense in which the New Testament employs it is not about bishops, presbyters, or any ministrants as such, but about Christians; as is evident to any one who will consider Heb. 10:19-22; 13:15; 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6. Thus Mr. M. is doubly wrong: he gives the term tepees to rulers or ministers, who are never so designated in their official quality; he withholds it from those who alone on earth possess it now according to scripture and God's intention.

Nor is this a question of words. The more the principle is looked into, the more evidently will the truth appear, and its importance. The distinctive blessing of the Gospel is that those who truly believe are brought to God, not yet literally to heaven, and not merely to remission, to peace, or any such privilege only, but even now really in heart and conscience to God; and this by virtue of a work already effected and of perfect efficacy and eternal value—by the infinite work of redemption. Hence access to God is the present grace of God wherein we stand by faith in Christ, at least its most precious part upwards, as liberty of heart is its sweet fruit downward.

Protestantism which tells me there is no such thing as priesthood now. It also demonstrates the fatal error of Ritualism, which falls into the gainsaying of Korah and arrogates for ministry as such the place which belongs to the true Aaron only—the place of efficacious representation as the ground of sacrifice. The truth differs essentially from the last and goes incomparably beyond the cold poverty of the first.

Ministry in the word is not priesthood; it is the exercise of a gift distributed by the Holy Spirit in subservience to the glory of the Lord Jesus. It is consequently the calling of a few for the good of the many—of all. But priesthood is the title of immediate approach to God, now in Christianity to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Hence the expression of priesthood is in the common worship of the Church, of God's saints as such, who are brought nigh to God absolutely and forever, the employment on earth now which will be sustained in heaven throughout eternity; as the expression of ministry in the word is in the proclamation of the Gospel to the world and in the building up of believers in their most holy faith by those only who are divinely called and qualified for that work.

The New Testament speaks of no peculiar dress for the minister, even if an apostle, though ministry be necessarily distinctive. It could speak of no distinctive dress for a priest without denying the most essential blessing of all Christians—their common priesthood, true now, and (always excepting the priesthood of Christ for us) exclusively theirs now. It is impossible either to exaggerate the gravity of this truth, or to deny the awful extent to which it has been forgotten both practically and in principle throughout Christendom. If the surplice were right now, all Christians should wear it. But this I am persuaded would lower the truth from faith to sense.

Chapter 205

Romanism

At the root of Romanism lies infidelity, not of course in the gross form of denying Christianity in its fundamental truths, or the historical basis of Christianity; but in the annulling those truths on which the blessing of the soul depends, or their application to it. It is a sensuous religion, fills the imagination with gorgeous ceremonies, noble buildings, fine music, and stately processions. It feeds it with legends and the poetry of antiquity; but it gives no holy peace to the conscience; ease it may, but not peace; and while accrediting itself with asceticism, accepts for the mass of its votaries full association with the world. It holds sin over the conscience as terror, and relieves from that terror by human intervention, so as to put power into man's hand—into the hands of the priesthood. Looked at as a picture, it fills largely the imagination; in practice it degrades. Christianity (in its true sense, whatever its shortcomings may have been) and Protestantism elevate. I shall refer to this last elsewhere. It has largely failed in result, but in its nature, as compared with Romanism, it elevates.

Christianity brings us directly, immediately, to God. Each individual is directly, immediately, in relationship to God—his conscience before God, his heart confidingly in His presence. Judaism had a priesthood; the people could not go into God's presence. They might receive blessings, offer offerings, celebrate God's goodness, have a law to command them: but the way into the holiest was closed by a veil, “The Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest.” When the Lord Jesus died, the veil was rent from top to bottom, and “we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he has consecrated through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.” “Having made peace by the blood of his cross;” suffered once, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” “His blood cleanseth from all sin.” Hence the essence of Christianity, as applied to man, is that the Christian goes himself directly, personally, to God in Christ's name, and through Christ, but himself into the holiest, and with boldness. He has by Christ access through the one Spirit to the Father, the Spirit of adoption.

Thus our being brought nigh by the blood of Jesus characterizes Christianity in its nature. The holiness of God's own presence is brought to bear on the soul. “If we walk,” it is said, “in the light, as he is in the light” —yet not as in fear, which repels, for we know perfect love through the gift of Jesus. We have boldness to enter into the holiest, that place where the presence of God Himself assures that the confidence of love will be the adoration of reverence; while we go forth to the world, that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal bodies—the epistle (as it is said) of Christ. I am not discussing how far each individual Christian realizes it; but this is what Christianity practically is. He has made us kings and priests to God and His Father. This elevates truly.

Man is not elevated by intellectual pretensions; for he never gets, nor can get, beyond himself. What elevates him is heart-intercourse with what is above him; what truly elevates him, is heart-intercourse with God, fellowship (wondrous word!) with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. But even where the heart has not found its blessed home there through grace, this principle

morally elevates; for it at least puts the natural conscience directly before God, and refers the soul, in its estimate of good and evil, personally and immediately to Him. There may be self-will and failure, but the standard of responsibility is preserved for the soul. I do but sketch the great privilege on which I insist.

Romanism has, wherever it exercises its influence, closed the veil again. The faithful are not reconciled to God, they cannot go into the holiest, they do not know (as they quote from Ecclesiastes, with so false an application) love and hatred by all that is before them, they have a priesthood between them and God, and saints, and the Virgin Mary. Christianity is a divine work which, through the redemption and life of a heavenly Mediator, has brought us to God: Romanism, a system of mediators on earth and in heaven, placed between us and God, to whom we are to go, who go for us, we being too unworthy to go ourselves.

It sounds lowly, this voluntary humility; but it shuts out the conscience from the witness of God's presence, it casts us back on our unworthiness, it puts away and denies the perfect love of God as known to us (shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given to us) through Christ. It repudiates the blessed tender grace of Jesus, that High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. We must go to the heart of Jesus through the heart of Mary, they tell us. Surely I would rather trust His, blessed and honored as she may have been and was in her own place. It removes me from God, to connect me immediately with creatures, however exalted, for my heart, and with sinful men for my conscience, who are to judge of and absolve me.

All this is degrading: it is the denial of Christianity, not in its original facts, but in its power and application to man. Take a few illustrations of what I mean. They hold the great facts or truths of Christianity—the trinity, the divinity, and humanity of Christ, the atonement (so far as its sufficiency goes, not however as effectual substitution), that men are sinners (this also very imperfectly), and the need of regeneration (though they scorn the true force of the word). They hold the inspiration of the scriptures, though they have falsified them both in adding books, which every honest man knows are not genuine scriptures, and in giving a translation as the authentic scriptures. They own in a general way the personality and agency of the Holy Ghost.

My object is not here to state exactly every point, but to say in general that they own the great fundamental facts of Christianity. It is not there that the spirit of infidelity shows itself. But the moment you come to the application of these facts to men, to their efficacious value, all is lost. The scriptures are inspired, but the faithful are incapable of using them. In vain is it that they are addressed by God Himself through the inspired writers to the body of believers. They must not have them but by leave of others. In vain is it that there is a Holy Ghost; He does not so lead and guide individuals as that they can walk in peace and grace, and understand withal His word. They mock at the thought of His dwelling in believers. They bring the divisions and faults of believers to prove He cannot be there; that is, they use man's sin to deny God's goodness and truth, just as infidels do. Even as to the scriptures their universal question is the same as the infidel's—How do you know them to be the scriptures? Their doctrine is, You must believe in them through the Church (that is, they do not command faith in and by themselves, nor is man guilty if he reject them), just as the infidel says. God's word must be believed because God has spoken, and for no other reason, or it is not believing His word at all. Grace, no doubt, is needed for it, as for everything; but man's responsibility is there, as the Lord said, “If ye believe not that I am he, ye

shall die in your sins.” They were responsible for not receiving Him, with all ecclesiastical authority rejecting Him; so are men as to the word.

Again, the sacrifice of Christ, they do not deny it. They repeat it in the mass in an unbloody sacrifice, they say. But scripture says it was accomplished once for all, and contrasts it in its efficacy with the Jewish sacrifices, the repetition of which proved that sin was still there. Whereas, the sacrifice of Christ, offered once for all, having perfectly put away sin for him who believes, there could be no repetition; the believer is perfected forever, and God remembers his sins and iniquities no more. Their repetition shows unbelief in this blessed truth. The believer is not perfected forever; the sacrifice must be repeated; it is not true that God will not remember their sins and iniquities any more. That is, the sacrifice is not denied; its efficacy, once offered for the believer's soul, is.

Again, take Christ's intercessional mediator ship. Christianity presents to me that blessed One, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, a man tempted in all points as we are, without sin; one who also can be touched with the feeling of my infirmities, who has suffered being tempted, and thus is able to succor them that are tempted. In a word, the Son of God Himself has descended into our sorrows and trials, and passed through them in tender gracious love, that I might confide in His sympathy and love, and know He could feel for and with me. Do they deny His priesthood and intercession? No. But in fact there is a crowd of mediators, above all, Mary His mother. And why? He is too high and glorious. Any poor man would seek a friend at court to have the king's ear; it is the heart of Mary I am to trust, and get the saints' intercession, and reach His heart through Mary's. The whole truth and value of Christ's intercessory love is destroyed and denied in practice. The saints' and Mary's intercession are trusted, their tenderness and nearness believed in—not Christ's. Heathenism denied the one true God the Creator (though in a certain sense owning him as a dogma) by a multiplicity of gods in practice. God intervenes by a Mediator in the most perfect system of blessing; but Romanism, while admitting the mediator ship of Christ as a dogma, has denied the one true mediator ship in practice by a multiplicity of mediators. It is the heathenizing of Christianity, that is, of the blessed truth of a redeeming Mediator.

Chapter 206

Romans 5:12 - Romans 8

I purpose to look at the testimony given us in the first part of the Epistle to the Romans (chap. 1-8), not merely as a doctrine or theory, but endeavoring to regard it as an individual, to look certain things in the face which are brought before us. It is here we get God's estimate of man: the first Adam and all his race and the blessing He has for any of that race whom He means to bless. There is one thing lurking in the mind of many true Christians which hinders the soul's perfect peace in the presence of God; and that is, a wrong thought of God's estimate of man, and that there is something in man that God can look upon.

Chapter 1:16, shows us, not man's righteousness, but God's dealing with man as a creature as to whether he could meet the demands which God had on him. It is the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel, not dealing in righteousness, but revealed from faith to faith—faithwise and to faith.

Next, verse 18 is His wrath “revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness” —not against a class merely, but against all ungodliness. Some hold the truth in unrighteousness, and others do not. It is the question now what God means to do with man as man. It is not only a statement of the Apostle Paul, but the preaching of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, that man's case was utterly hopeless. God's Son had been into the world. They had with wicked hands crucified and slain Him, and nothing remained but God's wrath. Man had crucified Christ and we get the statement in verse 4 that God had declared Him to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead. If God deals according to that, there can be nothing but wrath. Has your soul ever been in the presence of God, whose wrath is thus revealed—His thoughts against sin? If you have, you have been stripped of everything about you, and as a creature you deserve the wrath of God from heaven.

The apostle then goes on to show what the character of man is. (Ver. 19.) Creation was a witness of the unity and goodness of God, but man himself becomes a god-maker after the imagination of his own heart. The things which he called gods were unlike anything in creation; he made them after his own imagination, and the result is, God gives them up.

Not so with me, says the Jew (in chapter 2). No: he met God, and what did he do? He met God in the world, manifest in the flesh, come in love to reconcile the world. They met Him, they sat in judgment on Him. They always sought to justify themselves, and therefore condemned the Lord Jesus Christ, and the wrath is revealed.

That which might be known of God, the works of His hands, had been manifest to the Gentile. God Himself come in the flesh had been manifested to the Jew.

Chapter 3 is something a little more specific. Man is brought into court. (Ver. 9, &c.) God is here bringing forward a series of counts He has got against him, not taken from one psalm or prophet merely, but bits collected from different parts of the scriptures, so as to give the different characters of man. Some of the counts might seem to be spoken only against notorious sinners.

(Ver. 13-16.) “Their throat is an open sepulcher.” But there are some which must apply to all, verse 17 for instance— “The way of peace have they not known.” What man of Adam's race ever knew the way of peace? See how he winds up the trial” Every mouth stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.”

This is the difference between chapters 1 and 3. Chapter 1 is about the wrath of God. Here we get man in court; every generation from Adam to the millennium, and the result of the trial. All that God can say of the creature, from the creation downward, is “None righteous, no not one.” The only place we can take is to plead guilty. And now nothing will satisfy God but our being brought, like the lost sheep and the prodigal, into His presence rejoicing. I do not think it will satisfy Him until He has rooted out every bit of thought of good in the creature. It must be so, for unless He brings man into this position, it would not be true that none are justified by works. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Ver. 24-26.)

In chapter 1 we get the great work God has to make known for His own glory; but we find there are no people fit for it to be revealed amongst. If God deals now in righteousness, I am lost forever, nothing but lost. If one thing of self remains in your mind, it hinders your receiving God's testimony about Christ— “All.... come short of the glory of God.” Now God says, they have not cared for My name, for My glory; I will care for it Myself; I will show the sort of God I am, contrary to their thoughts. I will take My own way. I will deliver My Son for (on account of) their offenses, and raise Him again for (on account of) their justification. The delinquent gets a free pardon. If men are dealing with men, there is some ground on which a man committing an offense may be pardoned. You are a delinquent. God says, I come in with this forgiveness and justify for My own name's sake.

I remember, forty years ago, learning what the forgiveness of sins was; but then, after rejoicing awhile, I found what the nature of sin was, and did not know how to get rid of it; and it is a much more difficult thing to get rid of.

In chapter 4 we get two men brought before us, Abraham and David; but there is an immense difference between the imputing of righteousness to these two men.

Abraham is called out, and he went out according to God's call to him; he took the promise in simplicity. If God has promised, He will certainly do it; God imputes faith to him for righteousness. The tenor of chapter 4 is the walk of the man who had faith. The time came when God gave Abraham the promise about a son, and God is more than a match for all the difficulty.

It is very different with David. (Psa. 32 and 51.) He learns God's way of justifying him who had committed sin. It was all known. His sin has come to light, and then he gets his conscience purged. In the opening of chapter 5 we have the life of faith in a believer now. It is the same faith that Abraham had, with this difference—that to Abraham it was a promise that it should be imputed; with us it is retrospective. Here we get a saint in weakness, not sinning.

In chapter 3 it is a question of a sinner and his sins; now from chapter 5:12 the apostle come, to the question of self. It was not God's mind to leave the believer there with only his sins gone. Now He sets in contrast the first and Second Adam. There is the evil nature in man; and what becomes of this? God shows how He gets rid of it in believing people by associating them with Christ. By the first Adam, judgment came; by the last, the free gift came. We now get two things. The first aspect

of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ is that righteousness is shining forth on all, in the end of chapter v.; and there are some who believe, and to whom it is imputed. Then in chapter vi., the believer identifies himself with the thought of God, and can say that he is not only forgiven, but crucified, dead, and risen with Christ. Christ becomes the hiding place of the believer. I am still on the ground of mercy. My feet shall stand on the ground that marks my position in the first Adam. Mercy was found in chapter 3, but the believer was there looked at as remaining on the ground of the first Adam.

Now (chap. 6) God sets forth His Son that I might recognize myself in Him. I am put out of sight. I am dead with Christ, buried and put clean out of sight. This is the difficulty found by many. They cannot take the place of saying, I reckon myself dead; I am bidden by God Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at the difference between Saul and Paul. God reveals His Son in him; and now I look upon this man as hid in the cleft of the Rock that is higher than he; I look upon him as hid in Christ and all my thoughts roll around the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the opening of chapter 6 he is challenging the believer. “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? Do ye not know, that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” This is where Christian liberty comes in. It is not now a question of God's wrath against you, but you are no longer looked upon by God as connected with the first Adam at all. I am reckoning self dead.

There are two things I would now notice. First, that when the soul is in communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, there is power to make the life of Christ manifest. Secondly, there is power to refuse things which would be according to the flesh, “Always bearing about in the body the dying (or, deadness) of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal bodies.” “Sin shall not have dominion over you.”

There are two more things I would advert to. First, being in the light, I find God's wrath revealed against all ungodliness; God challenges the conscience and then justifies the believer. Secondly, in union with Christ, I get what dissociates me from the first Adam altogether. Do you understand God and yourself thus?

In chapter 5 the two Adams are brought to light. Chapter 7 the believer takes his stand under the last Adam. There are two more positions I would look at. The question in chapter 7 is, In what power am I to walk in newness of life? Here he passes through the experience of a soul drawing all its energy from self. He finds that all the springs which self supplies are in vain. He finds himself attached to a body of sin and death, and the result is, “O wretched man that I am!” He wants deliverance from self not only by faith but in power. If we examine carefully the workings of what is generally called Christianity, we find almost all the religious machinery counts upon human energy, and the end of this is, “O wretched man!” Energy cannot come from self. But in chapter viii. we get the power. “They that are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit.” Why are believers not fruitful in every good work? Because they are trusting to some energy of their own instead of the energy of the Holy Ghost. We are not reflecting the Christ which the world hates. What is the way that God works? By communicating a life, the exhibition of resurrection power. The way man works is not on the principle of death and resurrection at all— “that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.” I have got life in connection with the exhibition of resurrection power.

Paul knew he had to do with a certain character in God who had delivered him, but it was by a way that was rolling him down into depths every step. The selfsame God marks every step of the way all through the wilderness. God is a present God with us. He did not bring us out of the Red Sea to meet us again at Jordan. No: He will mark out all the wilderness path. He Himself is with us all the way. We have not yet got to the Father's house; but I would ask, Will there ever be a time when the Father's heart will be more set on us than now?

How far are we walking with God? My conviction is that if we are not, we shall be swept out of the path by the next wave of difficulty that washes over us. But if you are walking with Him, you will find the same hand which was stretched out to smite the Shepherd turned upon you, the little ones, to guide you all the way.

Romans 1-8

I should like to go a little into the question, How are we saved? In the first eight chapters of Romans we get the gospel fully brought out. It is just the answer to the question, How can a man be just with God? This is the great question of the whole epistle. We do not get resurrection with Christ in this epistle, nor do you get union. It is death with Christ and life through Him. When you get resurrection with Christ you get union with Him in life; and when you get union you never get justification; it is a new creation and that does not want justifying. This is the teaching of Ephesians, where you get nothing about justification; but all the privileges and duties of the new creation. In Rom. 1 get sinners, and they want justification. In Ephesians we are looked at as “dead in trespasses and sins.” There are two parts of justification— “from sin” and “of life;” the first, the clearing me of my old state, and the second, the putting me into a new place before God. These two parts are treated of distinctly in chapters 1. - 8. of this epistle, dividing them into two parts, the first part ending at chapter vii. In chapter 1 we get the ground that called for justification— “The wrath of God revealed against all ungodliness.” It is not governmental wrath, but wrath against the sinner; and “all have sinned, and come short” —of what we ought to be? of the law? all this is simple, but the word says, “short of the glory of God.” The whole dealings of Christianity are on the ground of that. You must either walk in the light or have nothing to do with God. It is not God hidden behind a veil and setting up a law as to what you ought to be; but you are to walk in the light, as He is in the light. We get justification in that verse in Col. 1, “Giving thanks to the Father who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” A man's being born again does not make him meet, his being quickened makes him feel the need of it; there is another thing needed that fits you for that, and that is justification. The first thing that we get about the gospel is, that it is “concerning his Son Jesus Christ,” not about ourselves first. People have lost sight of the claims of Christ. He is become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.

There are two things we get here (chap. 1:2-4) in the person of Christ. First, in connection with the promises. People rest on promises. All the promises are fulfilled by Him and in Him: Christ is Himself the accomplishment of the promise. “For all the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” This was by means of His incarnation, and sufferings, and death: “Made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” He fulfilled the promises; but I do not mean to say but that we have precious promises to help us on the way. Verse 17. “Therein,” in the gospel, “is the righteousness of God revealed.” Then he goes on to lay the ground why there must be a righteousness of God, because there is none in man. “Holiness” is connected with the nature of God. The reason I am so bold about the gospel is because it is the righteousness of God. In chapter 1 he first states the fact, that the righteousness of God is revealed from heaven. In chapter 2 the proof of this and the condition of man. In chapter 3 the apostle is giving us first the privileges of the Jew; then he says, the very thing you boast of is that which condemns you: “Now we know that what things soever the law saith,” &c. Then all are brought under sin. Then he turns (ver. 21) to the question of righteousness. What is wanted is fitness to stand in God's presence and not

come short of His glory. It was “witnessed by the law and the prophets.” The Lord our righteousness was witnessed in the prophets, but manifested now. Now it is without law. Though he speaks of righteousness, he does not go beyond faith in His blood; and then he takes up the Old Testament saints.

“Through faith in his blood.” Propitiation meets God as a righteous holy Judge. When a person has offended or wronged another, he requires a propitiation. Here God provides the propitiation, and is setting Him forth. God had forborne with the Old Testament saints. Here His righteousness in doing so is declared. God's righteousness is now not only revealed, but also imputed to the believer. Then He takes up Abraham and David, and shows that they both concur in this testimony. Justification or righteousness does not go farther than forgiveness here. (Chap. 4:3-5.) There is a great deal more in justification, but we are not come to that yet. The accounting righteous in this part of the epistle is the same as forgiveness. What is a propitiation for? Is it not for sin? God sitting as a Judge, and man brought before Him guilty. The death of Christ glorifies God Himself. It is of immense importance to see the way God takes to put away the sins of the old man; there can be no peace without it. It is another thing to see how God makes a new man.

We get two distinct characters of blessedness in these chapters the first, chapter 5:1-11; the second, chapter 8. In chapter 5:1 get higher things about God than I do in chapter 8. In chapter 5 I find what God is to the sinner; in chapter 8 it is what He is to the new man in Christ Jesus. God is more fully revealed in the absolute goodness of His character in chapter 5, because it is there His dealings with the sinner, as guilty before Him, and having come short of His glory. But the saint is in a higher place in chapter 8—there God is for me. in the first place (chap. 5), God is known as the Justifier; in the second (chap. 8), as Abba, Father. Part one ends at chapter 5:11: that is, the way God deals with a sinner about his sins. Now we come to part two. Part one has nothing to do with experience: there I get my debts paid; this may produce very happy feelings, as we see in chapter v. Part two has everything to do with experience. “No condemnation” —then it is not sinners. In chapter 4,” Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”

A man in that sense is faultless before God. Christ has made an atonement, and if you believe in Him, no sin will be imputed to you. Quickening is not introduced in part one; man's nature is not there treated of. It has to do with sins and the remedy—Christ dying for our sins. In part two, it is sin and the remedy, my dying with Christ. The whole work was settled on the cross, but it is presented in resurrection. We must have resurrection to make it complete. It must be complete to be presented. “Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and present us with you.” (2 Cor. 5:14.) Sanctification comes before justification when they are spoken of together. “Ye are washed, sanctified, justified.”

It is the fruit and not the tree that is judged in part one. The tree itself is judged in part two. In chapter 3 we get faith in the blood of Christ. In chapter 4 it is faith in the God of resurrection— “if we believe in him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.” I find the sinner in his sins, Christ dying, and the sins not imputed to him. Here is a man who has done this, that, and the other, and Christ died for him. God has raised up Christ, and I believe in Him and am justified. It is ratified. Justification was not completed on the cross: the work by which we are justified was; but I do not get the assurance of it until I see Christ in resurrection. “If Christ is not risen, ye are yet in your sins.” If my surety is not out of prison, I cannot say I am justified. Supposing me in prison for E.'s

debt, my acquaintance is his justification, not my paying the debt. There are the two things necessary, not only the mortgage paid but also the deed signed. The work on the cross is that by which I am justified, He was raised again. in order to our justifying. He was delivered, our offenses being before His mind. He was raised, our justifying being before His mind. Then chapter 5 begins, “Having been justified, we have peace.” Here we get the whole past, present, and future—justified as to the past; having peace with God and standing in the favor of God as to the present, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God as to the future. Peace, favor, glory, what more can you want? We may get all sorts of troubles here, but what a mercy God sees me righteous! He never withdraws His eyes from the righteous. I am a righteous man; now I can glory in tribulation, &c. I have the key to all this. I have learned by all this process not only what I am but what He is. I have the Holy Ghost in me, as a consequence of justification, shedding abroad the love of God in my heart. I can joy too in God Himself (before whom in chapter 3. I was guilty and my month stopped), not only that I know myself but I know God too—God in His own absolute goodness. Peace is a fuller deeper thing than joy; when I know that all is settled and that I am reconciled, then I have peace. A person may have joy and not yet know himself reconciled. The prodigal may have had a measure of joy in leaving the for country, but he has not peace till he has met the Father and learns what is the Father's heart toward him. This is all individual. I have got my sins, my peace, my joy, &c. You have got yours. But when you come to chapter v. 12, we get all in a lump. All ruined in one man. We have had a man’s actions first; now we come to man’s condition. Adam ruined us all. It is the state of the race and not of the individual. I get entirely away from God, and I have a nature away from God. If this be known without any knowledge of the grace of God, it must drive a man to despair, but God never allows it to be so quite. Grace has put away your sin. Another thing God says— “You are dead;” but then if I look at my experience, it contradicts that. I say, “How can I be dead when I find the nature there? I have got in a passion.”

In chapter v, 12 we do get to the nature; and I get more troubled about sin in me than by my past sins. But here we get the remedy too; not that Christ has died for my sins, but that I am dead with Christ to sin. The doctrine is “By one man's obedience,” and “by one man's disobedience.” Oh! then, if by the obedience of one, I am made righteous, I can live on as I like? No; the apostle says, “You are dead.” How can I live on if I am dead? This is justification of life here. We have now the positive side of justification: “There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” As we get, in the first eleven verses of chapter v., the blessedness of the believer as the result of what the apostle had been bringing out in the previous part of the epistle, Christ dying for our sins, so in chapter viii. we get the blessedness which is the result of what the apostle had brought out from chapter 5:12 to the end of chapter 7.

In part one we had what the sinner has done put away; in part two it is a question of what he is: acceptance would be connected with part two. Righteousness imputed is not the same thing as reckoning a person righteous. If I pay E.'s debts, he is reckoned righteous; but the character of imputed righteousness is something to go on with. “Sin is not imputed when there is no law.” (Ver. 13.) It is as plain as A, B, C. How can a man break a law when he has not got it? You cannot say to the Gentile, “You have transgressed the fifth commandment,” because the law was never given to him. In Hos. 6 we read, “They like Adam have transgressed the covenant.” Adam received a commandment and lived so long as he obeyed it. And under Moses Israel received the law by keeping which they should live; but from Adam to Moses there was no commandment, yet death

reigned over those who had transgressed no given law. We get no forgiveness here. Sin is never forgiven but condemned. “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sacrifice for sin condemned sin in the flesh.” (Chap. 8:3.) Sin is got rid of by death. If a man dies, there is an end.

Chapter 5:15. We see that the grace must have an aspect as large as the sin. The presentation of grace is to the whole world, but its application is only to those who receive the gift. Verse 18: “as by one offense towards all unto condemnation, so by one righteousness towards all unto justification of life. The one righteousness as God's gift is unto all, but it is only upon all them that believe. (Chap. 3:22.) The contrast here (verse 18) is not between the persons, but the one offense and the one righteousness. The gift of righteousness is unto all: just as the sin of Adam addresses itself to the whole race; so does the one righteousness. “Justification of life?” Here I get justification connected with life (not only from my sins); but I have got life. (Ver. 20.) “The law” comes in by the bye. The law required man to make out a righteousness. “The law entered that the offense might abound.” It is not that sin might abound but the offense. God never made sin abound. Sin abounded over the whole race, and there grace much more abounds. The law not only made sin more manifest, but also aggravated its character. The authority of God has been brought in and despised. A child might do wrong without knowing it, but when the father gives him a command about it, it becomes disobedience. In chapter 2:12, what is translated sinned “without law” is the same word as in 1 John 3:4 (sin is the “transgression of the law"); it should be “sin is lawlessness.”

What is the meaning of Heb. 9:26, “Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of himself?” I believe it extends to the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. So also “the Lamb of God which beareth away the sin of the world.” The work that accomplishes it is done, but the power is not yet put forth. 1 John 2:2. “Propitiation for the whole world.” That is, atonement has been made and the blood is on the mercy seat, so that all hindrance is removed. In Heb. 9:26, 28 we get the two things, “sin put away” and “sins borne,” just as we get the sin offering and the scapegoat on the day of atonement. The blood of the sin offering was first sprinkled on and before the mercy seat, then the sins of Israel were confessed over the head of the scapegoat. (Lev. 16) The blood on the mercy seat now is the ground of invitation to the sinner. I say now to the sinner, Christ has died, and the blood is on the mercy seat, and you will be received if you come. If he accepts the invitation, I can tell him more. Not Only has the Lord Jesus put away sin, but He has borne all your sins and confessed them as if they were His own; and they are all gone. It is never said Christ died for the sins of the world. Rom. 11:7. I am dead and justified from sin. Now I can reckon myself dead. It is not I: I have had enough of I. Now Christ is I. If I am alive through Christ, I died through Christ. “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” A young man has had debts, but his father has paid them, and made him a partner in his own business. Now he speaks not of my business, my concerns, &c., but our business, our concerns. But here in Romans it is keeping up the individuality, so we do not get union, we do not get risen with Christ. In Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians we get three stages of advance: in Romans, dead with Christ and alive through Christ; in Colossians, dead with Him and risen with Him; in Ephesians, dead in trespasses and sins, quickened together, raised up together, made to sit together in Him in heavenly places. In Romans the individual is cleared from what he was as a child of Adam and gets the privileges of a child of God.

Chapter 6:16. Now you are perfectly free: what are you going to do with yourself? You were a slave to sin, now yield yourself to God. In chapter 7 we have the same principle applied to law. Verse 4. Having died to the law by the body of Christ, now I am connected with Christ—Him who is raised from the dead. The deduction is, you cannot have both the law and Christ. Verse 6 should be “having died in that wherein we were held.” It is not the law that is dead, but I am dead. The law is the jailer, I am the prisoner. The mistake people are making is that they are killing the jailer instead of the thief. The jailer is not dead, the thief is. Now if you look back, you will see the condition of a man under law. It is the experience of a quickened soul under law. Experience comes in here, and not in the first part of the epistle. If a man is not absolutely lawless, conscience puts him under law. He says, I ought to do this and I ought to do that. The regular Hyper Calvinists put a man in Rom. 7 and keep him there. They put him in the seventh before he gets to the third. In chapters 2 and 3 it is what a man has done. In chapter vii. it is what he is in himself. It is not that I have done bad things, but “I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” This must be learned experimentally, and not merely known as a doctrine. The soul here learns three things. First, That in himself, that is, in his flesh, dwells no good thing. Secondly, He sees that the flesh is not himself, for he hates it. Thirdly, That it is too strong for him, and he cries out for deliverance. It is God bringing a man to the full knowledge of himself; then be says, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver,” &c. Then Christ comes in, and we have the full deliverance of chapter viii.

“When I was in the flesh.” (Chap. 7:5) Many Christians would not know what that means at all. It is the state of the past. This chapter is experimental, and the truth must be learned not merely as a theory but experimentally. To say my sins are forgiven is not experience; but if you tell me something about myself, my experience answers to it, or it does not. We never give up the flesh till we have learned how thoroughly bad it is. I must learn to say, “It is not I,” though not to say it lightly, because as a child of Adam responsible, it is I; but I have found out another I. As to the flesh, there is no question of forgiveness. I do not forgive an offending power, I want deliverance from it. In Romans, my being alive in Christ is stated as a fact, but the doctrine is not brought out as in Ephesians. The more spiritual we are, the more we shall see the infinite value of the cross. “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus,” &c. (2 Cor. 4)—always keeping it before my faith—holding the cross to the flesh because I am not in the flesh (otherwise I could not do it).

People talk of whether future sins are forgiven. All my sins were future when Christ died for them; but I ought not to talk of future sins; there is grace enough to keep me from them, and I must not excuse them. Souls have to learn what sins are. Christ, having met the consequences of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, becomes the tree of life to me.

Rom. 5:1-11 is what God is in love to the sinner. Chapter 8 is the condition of the believer with God. Would you not like to feel better in yourself? That is I.

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Chapter 208

Notes on Romans 4:1-12

The previous reasoning, and especially the statement of the apostle towards the close of chapter iii., had made justification to depend evidently and exclusively on the expiatory work of Jesus. God was thereby just and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. And this, as he had further shown, at once opens the door of grace to Gentiles as well as Jews, while it establishes law instead of annulling its authority (as the salvation of sinners on any other principle must).

This naturally raised the question of the saints in Old Testament times, before Jesus and the gospel which, since His advent, is preached to every creature. How does the doctrine agree with God's ways in their case? Accordingly the apostle takes two instances which would naturally occur to a Jewish objector: one the depositary of promise from God, as regards the chosen people; the other the true type of royalty over them according to God—Abraham and David, but especially Abraham. Both, we shall see, confirm the great argument instead of presenting the smallest difficulty to be removed.

“What therefore shall we say that Abraham, our [fore-]father according to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath matter of boast, but not before God. For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh the reward is not reckoned according to grace, but according to debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.” (Ver. 1-5.)

What, then, is the true inference from the history of Abraham? If justified by works, certainly the credit would be his; but this is never found before God. And with this the scripture accords; for it speaks not of his goodness before his call or acceptance, but expressly of his faith in God's word as that which he exercised, and which was accounted as righteousness. (Gen. 15:6.) No Jew who bowed to the divine authority of the Pentateuch could dispute this. Was it, then, consistent or at issue with the gospel? If a man work, the reward is not viewed as a gratuity, but as the wages due to him; but if instead of working he believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, what a magnificent proof and conclusion that his faith is reckoned for righteousness! This is free grace, and the very reverse of a debt according to law; and such was the principle of God's dealings with their great forefather according to the inspired account of Moses.

Take again the testimony of David. Does he fall in with the gospel or contradict the legislator? The sweet psalmist of Israel confirms them, for he pronounces those blessed whom the law could only curse. “Just as David also speaketh of the blessedness of the man to whom God reckoneth righteousness without works. Blessed [they] whose iniquities were forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed a man whose sin the Lord will in no way reckon.” (Ver. 6-8.) Unquestionably this is justification not by good but spite of evil works. It is God's grace blessing, not His law cursing, where there was no righteousness but only lawlessness and sin; yet the Lord reckons no sin whatever, but righteousness without works. No doubt, man is supposed to be altogether evil and without excuse; but this is the revelation of the God of all grace as He loves to be known by sinful

man. He justifies those who need it most—the ungodly. “This blessedness, therefore, [is it] upon the circumcision or also upon the uncircumcision for we say that to Abraham faith was reckoned for righteousness. How then was it reckoned? When he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received [the] sign of circumcision, a seal of the faith that [he had] in uncircumcision, in order to his being the father of all that believe while uncircumcised, in order that righteousness might be reckoned to them also; and father of circumcision, not only to those circumcised, but also to those that walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham while uncircumcised.” (Ver. 9-12.)

We have seen, then, faith counted as righteousness to Abraham, corroborated by the testimony of David to the blessedness of those whose bad works were remitted and to whom the Lord reckoned no sin. But a new question arises for the Jewish mind—Were not those blessed in the enjoyment of circumcision? Is it not limited to persons within that pale? Again the apostle brings in Abraham. Could any Jew slight him or hesitate as to the conditions of his blessing? How, therefore, in his case was faith reckoned to him? after or before he was circumcised? Beyond doubt, when he was uncircumcised, as their own inspired record made plain and sure. Circumcision was but a sign he received considerably later, as sealing the faith he had while in an uncircumcised state. Thus is Abraham more than any other fitted to be father of all that believe while uncircumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them; and father of circumcision (not of the circumcised, or Jews, as some perversely understand, but), of true separation to God, whether for the circumcised or for those also that walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham whilst uncircumcised.

The Jew, therefore, could not cite Abraham without being compelled by the scriptural history to allow that this precedent illustrates the grace of God in justifying the heathen, if possible, more forcibly than in its application to his own circumcised and lineal seed. God, if He pleased, could have justified Abraham after bringing him under the rite of circumcision; but He saw fit to do the very reverse. Not only was faith reckoned as righteousness to Abraham, but it was also beyond cavil whilst he was still uncircumcised; and circumcision was in no way a means of the grace that justifies, but a seal of the righteousness that was reckoned to him long before that sign was instituted by God.

Notes on Romans 4:12-18

Justification, then, is not of works: else man might boast of himself, instead of God being glorified. It is really according to grace, and not debt; and God reserves his prerogative of justifying the ungodly. Thus God and man have their due place; and as Abraham illustrated the principle, so David speaks of the pronouncing a blessing after this sort in Psa. 32 nothing but imputing righteousness without works could avail for the justifying of a sinner. Nor this only; for the very man, with whom circumcision began as the command of God, was expressly justified by faith before he was circumcised. So manifestly did God order all in his wisdom and goodness that circumcision should be but a seal of the righteousness of faith which Abraham had while yet uncircumcised. Thus the gentiles or the uncircumcised were especially provided for in the unquestionable facts recorded in the first book of the Pentateuch, as no Jew could deny. Abraham was father of all believers in a state like his own, and father of circumcision (i.e., separation to God, couched under that act which set forth mortification of the flesh) not only to the circumcised, but also to those that walk in the footsteps of the faith the ancestor of Israel had before circumcision. Believers from among the gentiles were thus as truly circumcised in the highest sense as Jewish ones

“For not by law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed, that he should be heir of [the] world, but by righteousness of faith. For if those of law [be] heirs, faith is made vain and the promise is annulled.” (Ver. 13, 14.)

The apostle now reasons from the necessary principle of God's promise. This excludes law and supposes faith-righteousness. For evidently law supposes the obedience of man as the condition of receiving the boon which is in question. It was not so in God's dealings with Abraham or his seed. There was not a word about His law when God gave promise to Abraham in Gen. 12, and to his seed in Gen. 22 The promise implies God's fulfillment of it; the law claimed man's obedience of its demands. They are thus, while each is admirable for its own end, absolutely different and mutually exclusive. The promised inheritance is not by law but by another sort of righteousness. It was annexed to faith; and this is so true, that if those who stand on law are heirs, no room is left for faith and the promise comes thus to naught. “For the law worketh out wrath; but where no law is, there is no transgression.” (Ver. 15.) The application is as clear as it is momentous, and this positively as well as negatively. The thing law generally, and in particular the law of God given by Moses, provokes by its very excellence the hostile self-will of man, and so detects his enmity and works out wrath in result. On the other hand, where there is no law, there is no transgression. It is no question of sin here, but of violating positive prescription, which latter of course could not be till the lawgiver uttered the enactments definitely. Then as law existed, it could be transgressed. But it was not yet promulgated in the time of Abraham, who had that wholly different thing—the promise.

The conclusion is, that as law would have defeated the promise of God and brought wrath on man, instead of the inheritance, “on this account [it is] of faith, that [it might be] according to grace in order to the promise being sure to all the seed, not only to that which is of law, but also to that

which is of Abraham's faith, who is father of us all (even as it is written, A father of many nations I have made thee), before God whom he believed, that quickeneth the dead and calleth the things that are not as if they are; who against hope believed in hope, in order to his becoming father of many nations according to that which was spoken, So shall be thy seed." (Ver. 16.-18.) As faith is opposed to works, so is grace to law; while the grace of God who gave the promise makes the sole and withal the large door of faith to open for Gentiles no less than Jews. Had law been the principle, Israel who boasted of possessing the law, though blind to their breaches of it and to their own enhanced exposure to wrath, could alone have made an effort, however vainly. But grace goes out to the Gentile no less than to the Jew who could hardly limit Abraham's paternity of "many nations" to his own people.

Here too another point of great value is noticed. The God whom Abraham believed quickens the dead and calls things that have no being as though they had. This was rendered evident not only by the fact that Sarah bore no child to Abraham, but by their great age when the promise was given. They were as good as dead, and a child of theirs had no existence. But what of all this to God? Long before the time God spoke, Abraham against hope believed in hope. What a pattern of faith! On the human side all was hopeless; on God's part there was simply His word. But Abraham believed, hoped, and was not ashamed. God could not fail to make good what He said "So shall be thy seed."

Notes on Romans 4:19-25

We are thus gradually advancing to the great principle of resurrection, which, while, it bears mainly on life, as we shall see in chapters v. - viii., plays also a most momentous part in justification. For this too the case of Abraham is employed: “And, not being weak in faith, he considered [not] his own body now dead, being about a hundred years old, and the deadening of Sarah's womb, yet as to the promise of God wavered not through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and fully assured that what he hath promised he is able also to perform.” (Ver. 19-21.) The promise of God was beyond hope, and contrary to it, if he reasoned from himself and Sarah; but yet he believed in hope, because God had declared he should have posterity numerous as the stars and the sand. Faith reasons from God and His word, not from self or circumstances.

In verse 19 there occurs a remarkable difference of reading; and yet, strange to say, though that which results is as opposite as can be, in either way the sense is good. For both appear to suit and carry on the argument, though of course one alone is the true and intended comment of the Spirit on the state of Abraham. There is excellent and perhaps adequate authority of every kind (manuscripts, versions, and ancient citations) for dropping the negative particle, which is therefore marked as doubtful in the version just before the reader's eye. If οᷠ be an interpolation, the meaning would be that Abraham, instead of slighting the obstacles, took full account of them all (Gen. 17:17), yet as regards the promise of God had no hesitation through unbelief, but on the contrary was inwardly strengthened in faith. If the ordinary reading be right, the meaning is that, far from being weak in faith, he paid no heed to the facts before his eyes whether in himself or in his wife, nor staggered at the promise of God through unbelief, but found strength in faith, giving glory to Him and satisfied that He was able also to perform the promise.

“Wherefore also it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Now it was not written on his account alone that it was reckoned to him, but on our account also, to whom it shall be reckoned [us] that believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord out of [the] dead, who was delivered fort our offenses and was raised for our justification.” (Ver. 22-25.)

Thus as faith was reckoned for righteousness to the father of the faithful, so is it to the believer now. But the apostle takes care to point out the difference as well as the analogy. The faith not of Abraham only but of all the Old Testament saints was exercised on promise. They all in a large sense waited for the accomplishment of what God held out, sure that He could not lie, and was able also to perform. But in the great ulterior object of their hope they were expecting One who was only promised and not yet come.

It is not so with the Christian; for though he, like the elders, obtains a good report by faith, and has his faith reckoned for righteousness, yet the personal object of hope is come, and has wrought the infinite work of redemption. This is an incalculable change, and fraught with mighty consequences. It is not of course that much does not remain to be effected when Christ comes again (changing the saints then alive, raising the dead believers, judging the quick and finally the dead who had no part in the first resurrection, and closing all in the eternal state); but as to the foundation of all this

and more, as to that work which alone could glorify God and justify sinful man, it is already done so perfectly that it admits of not a hairbreadth from God or man to render it more complete or efficacious. Such is the gospel of the grace of God; it is not promise but accomplishment; and so absolutely, we may boldly say, that, if not now done in the cross, in the death and resurrection of Him who hung there, it never can be done—not even by Him. Christ being risen from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over Him. Without His death in atonement, nothing was done which could adequately vindicate God about sin. In His death, God is glorified perfectly and forever. He has put away sin by His sacrifice. By His one offering for our sins, they are gone for the believer. This is no question of hope, but of faith in the efficacy of His redemption, which we already possess through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Hence we are viewed in scripture as receiving the end of our faith, namely, the salvation of our souls, though we have to wait for the change of our bodies into His glorious likeness at His coming for us. Besides, there are gracious promises of care in both natural and spiritual necessities along the path here below. But the great fact remains for faith, that the atoning work is done.

Let it be remarked, further, that here it is not a question of the Savior's blood as in chapter iii., but of God that raised Jesus our Lord from among the dead. The truth insisted on is not His grace who suffered all for our sins. It is the mighty intervention of God on our behalf in triumphant power, raising out of the dead Him who gave Himself to bear our judgment; or rather as it is here written, who was delivered on account of our offenses and was raised to secure our justification. Thus, in Rom. 3:26 the point is faith in Jesus; here, it is on Him that raised up Jesus. Such is the God whom we know. The fathers knew Him as He was pleased then to reveal Himself and link Himself with them. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob was the giver of promises assuredly to be accomplished in His time. But our God, while the same blessed and blessing Almighty, is (as we can say) far more than this. The Only-begotten who is in the bosom of the Father—He had declared Him—He who was full of grace and truth. Nor this only; for Jesus, conqueror of Satan in life, went down for us into death, was delivered for our offenses, and therein so glorified God that His righteousness could not but bring Him up from the dead. The sins that were laid on Him, where are they? Gone forever: blotted out by His precious blood. Could God leave Him in death who had thus afresh retrieved His glory and bound up with it the means of our eternal blessing? Impossible. He raised Jesus therefore from the dead and gave Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God.

As God, then, is thus made known to the believer now, so it will be noticed that all is here closed in justifying us. In the same verse of chapter iii., which has been already compared, we read that He might be “just and the justifier” of him that believeth in Jesus. For as we look on the blood of Jesus shed in expiation God has necessarily a judicial character. Sins must be judged according to all the holiness of a nature to which they are infinitely abhorrent. Here therefore God is declared to be just and the justifier of the believer. But in the end of chapter iv. we see that it is no longer a question of righteous satisfaction, as this had been completely settled in the blood of Jesus. Not so with justification. This derives an immensely increased value from the resurrection of Jesus which gloriously displayed in the Deliverer's person the victory that was won for us. He was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justifying. It is our Red Sea, and not merely our Passover.

Chapter 211

Notes on Romans 5:1-2

The weighty theme of justification has been now fully treated, on the side both of Christ's blood shed in expiation and of His resurrection as carried through death in the power of God; that is to say, both negatively and positively, bearing all the consequences of our sins and manifesting the new estate in which He stands before God.

In the former half of our chapter the apostle draws out the consequences of justification. From verse 12 he enters on a new part of his subject which runs down to the end of chapter 8 and is practically an appendix to what goes before.

“Having therefore been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have also had access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God.”

Peace with God we have as the first notable result of justification. Our previous state was enmity and war with God. But now that He has justified us by faith of Christ, we can look back at all the past, so humiliating to our souls, and yet we have peace with God.

It is a mistake to confound this with the ordinary apostolic salutation, which desires grace to the saints. and, “peace from God.” These we need continually, and feel so much the more to be needed because we have peace with God. Again, “the peace of God,” of which the apostle speaks in Phil. 4 is quite distinct; for it too is the want of the Christian in his daily circumstances. While he is enjoying peace with God as to his state, spite of the deep sense he may have of past guilt, he may not have the peace of God guarding his heart and his thoughts by Christ Jesus. He may be tried greatly and distracted, because anxious about this or that; if in one thing and another he fail by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to make known his requests to God, he will assuredly fail to enjoy the guardian power of His peace. This therefore differs indisputably from that primary blessedness, the fruit of justification, which the apostle treats as the common portion of believers in his Epistle to the Romans.

The next effect it is as important as it is sweet to take into account. Through our Lord Jesus Christ we have also, as a permanent blessing given already to us, the title of access into this favor wherein we stand. If the former was in view of all we had done in past hostility to God, this contemplates our actual place and the feeling which reigns where we stand. Blessed be God it is grace that reigns there. Not a breath is there, save of favor toward us who deserved, alas! to be cast out and contemned for our unworthy ways even since we have been brought to God. We do not stand under law: this were to fall from grace, the sure precursor of falling into sin, as well as the denial of the Savior and of His precious redemption, and of our own blessing. The access we have had through our Lord Jesus Christ is into the grace, the true grace of God, and there alone we stand; anywhere else we must fall from everything good and into all evil.

But there is a third result which must not be passed by. The greater the boon, whether you look at the past with its dark sin or at the present with the settled sunshine of God's favor, so much the

less can one bear to think of such blessedness coming to naught; and to naught it must all come, did the rich effects of justification depend on ourselves. But they do not. They come to us faith-wise, and they rest on Christ through whom alone they are our portion. They are not temporal like Adam's tenure of Eden, or Israel's possession of Canaan. They are secured through Him who died for our sins and is raised out of the dead. Can he lose the blessings He has thus won? No more can we for whom He won them. Hence we can exultingly look on the future. Not more certainly do we stand in present grace than “boast in hope of the glory of God.” Less than this does not suit our God to hold out before us. He will have us to be with and as Christ in His own glory. He deals with us who believe as to past, present, and future, according to what our Lord Jesus deserves and His eternal redemption. If the righteousness be God's righteousness, not man's, if divine righteousness be the starting-point, no wonder that the grace of God is the ground in which we stand, and that the glory of God is the sole adequate hope, whether we consider the person or the work of the Savior. May we boast of it and Him!

Chapter 212

Notes on Romans 5:3-5

The soul that believes has been thus shown us enjoying the results of justification as to past, present, and future. Admirable as a groundwork, it is not everything. God would bless the believer according to what is in His heart, yet with full consideration of passing circumstances. And this last is what the apostle can speak of, now that the course is clear from the starting-point to the goal of God's glory, the hope of which makes the heart exult.

Nevertheless we are in the place of trial still, we are in the wilderness, though sheltered by the blood of the Lamb and redeemed from Egypt and its prince. Indeed properly here above all are we put to the proof; here where no resources appear, God calls us to depend on and confide in Himself; here especially the enemy seeks to make us murmur in unbelief both as to the journey and as to the hope at the end of it. Egypt is the house of bondage; the wilderness is the scene of temptation; the land calls for conflict with the powers of darkness. The first two verses suppose us outside Egypt, and looking onward with joyful anticipation to the mountain of Jehovah's inheritance, the place He has made for Himself to dwell in.

Meanwhile there is nothing but desert around. Do we boast in hope notwithstanding? Assuredly, “and not only [so], but we boast in tribulation also.” This flesh can never do; it may affect stoical insensibility, but faith, while it increases our feeling, alone gives us to triumph.

Here, however, there is a process to which we need to take heed. In hoping for the glory of God, our boast is direct. It is not so with our tribulations. We should and do boast in them, but it is not immediate. It is the fruit of intelligent apprehension of God's gracious aim in these afflictions. Hence the apostle proceeds to set out how we are brought thus to traverse the judgment of nature. We boast in tribulations, says he; “knowing that tribulation worketh endurance; and endurance, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that was given to us.”

Such is the shining pathway of the Christian even here, because Christ is before the heart: otherwise, tribulation works out the impatience of the first man, not endurance through the Second. Then endurance sustained in faith works out experience, i.e., the proof of what is tested and stands; as this again, from what God is shown to be in gracious present care, strengthens hope; and this does not put to shame by failure and disappointment; because the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in our hearts the love of God, who loved us when there was nothing lovable in us, as we are shown after self is thus detected and judged, the world seen in its true colors, and God more than ever proved, and prized, and trusted.

This verse is remarkable as the first which speaks either of the Spirit given to us, or of the love of God which is thereby shed forth in us. We have His righteousness fully displayed and applied before there is any allusion to either. That God is wise in this, it is almost needless to remark. It is well that the soul should be shut up to that which is absolutely perfect outside ourselves on God's part and in virtue, not of the Spirit's work in us, but of Christ's for us. And so it is. Then in the path

of subsequent Christian experience, he can touch on and in due time unfold the love of God shed abroad in us, and the Holy Ghost given to us. We can then bear it safely. Had it been brought in before this, the heart would have readily turned to its own workings and affections from Christ and God's righteousness revealed in the gospel.

Notes on Romans 5:6-8

It may have been noticed that, though the apostle had carefully proved the ruin of man and the righteousness of God in which the believer has part, it is not so with His love. Of this he first speaks here as a thing not demonstrated but known and enjoyed. He assumes it from the common consciousness of Christians. It is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us.

Next we have God's love not thus subjectively viewed, but its display pointed out and grounded on the great objective fact of the death of Christ for us and outside us. “For while we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for [the] ungodly.” (Ver. 6.) How admirable the wisdom of God, and how wholesome! For even the believer convinced of his ungodliness is slow to appreciate his powerlessness. It was good to know that as man all was lost, and he had to do either with God's wrath in unbelief, or with His righteousness by faith. There is then the love of God in us, yea, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost; but the foundation of it is in Christ's death, when we had as little strength as we were far from godliness. This was just the opportunity for grace; and for such Christ died.

It is not after this sort that the creature—that man—loves. “For scarcely for a just [man] will one die.” Righteousness, as such, one esteems and values; but it does not draw out love so that one would die for a merely righteous person. Not that man's heart is not capable of strong affections; “for one might for the good [man] even dare to die.” (Ver. 7.) None among the sons of Adam could surpass such love as this.

“But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Ver. 8.) This is characteristically divine and sovereign. We were powerless, unjust, evil, nothing but sinners, on the one hand; and God, on the other, had no motive for His love other than itself. It is emphatically His own love. As another apostle puts it, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Only God can love thus. Man, the saint even, must have a motive without; God has none. He, and He only, is love. The spring is within, and He needs no object without to call it forth. Those whom His grace makes objects of His love are wholly and absolutely unlovable as to themselves, yet He loves them spite of all they are. While they were yet sinners, Christ died for them—the fullest proof of their sin and of God's love. Nothing less could avail; nothing more blessed could be done even by Him; and nothing less would suit Himself. Thus He commends His own love. What a resting place for both heart and conscience! He forgets nothing, judges all, yet loves us with a love that is perfect and altogether peculiar.

How admirable are the ways of God in Christianity! There is nothing which opens so vast a field for activity, either in love or in mind; for the truth revealed is the revelation in Christ of Him who is infinite. Yet withal is it the most simple adaptation to the wants of every heart awakened to its real state in relation to God and indeed also to man. Thus the display of His love in the death of Christ comes down to the child, while it wholly transcends the highest soarings of poor but proud philosophy. There is the most profound truth, but it is embodied in facts which speak to every heart

and conscience when the will has been dealt with by the Holy Spirit. While we were yet sinners Christ died for us; and in this God commends His own love toward us.

Chapter 214

Notes on Romans 5:9-10

WE have now to note the reasoning of the apostle, not indeed to prove the love of God; but beginning with it as known through the Holy Ghost given to us, he draws conclusions after a truly divine sort. Thus the consciousness of the Christian has its just and full place, and so has the proof of divine love. However shed abroad in the heart, its demonstration rests on the gift of Christ and His death for us, wholly without us. This presents the love of God toward us absolutely free from mixture with anything in us or of us. Hence, as there was nothing to draw it out and fix it on us, the result is no less sure. The reasoning is not all from divine counsels about us or promises made to us, but from what God is; and He is love—love proved in Christ's dying for us, while we were yet sinners. “Much more therefore, having been now justified by his blood, we shall be saved through him froth wrath.” Most sound and conclusive! But he next develops and applies it yet more definitely. “For if, being enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Neither the weakness nor the positive enmity of man hindered that love but furnished the deepest occasion for its display. Certainly there is nothing that can frustrate its results now. We were but sinners then; we have been justified in virtue of Christ's blood now. We were foes of God, but have now been reconciled to Him through the death of His Son—infinitely precious in His sight, infinitely efficacious in its effects for us. Impossible that such love could fail for those whom it placed in a relationship so excellent. Assuredly the blood, the death, of Christ has done great things for us: now that He is risen again for our justifying, is all to prove abortive? It could not be. The wrath of God awaits the unbelieving soul, yea, abides on him that submits not to the Son. But we have received Him, believing on His name; we have been justified in the power of His blood; and we shall be saved through Him from that wrath. How could it be otherwise? For us even now there is reconciliation. On the ground of the blood of Christ God has reconciled us to Himself. Not only are we no longer alienated, but He has brought us back and put us before Him according to His own grace, not reinstated merely (as if it were a replacing us in Adamic blessing), but according to His own nature and purpose by redemption. It is the due and normal place before God who would bless us in view of Christ and the results of His work for us on the cross. God reconciles; man, the believer, is reconciled, and this through, the death of His Son. There was His own love without limit in Christ; nevertheless, even that love alone could not have sufficed to meet the case. No love in se could have saved us who were enemies from His just wrath. The death of Christ puts everything in its due place, and conciliates all. Neither wrath on God's part nor enmity on ours is ignored. Christ shed His blood, and died; the believer is justified and reconciled, and God's love, which so wrought in Christ and for us, will yet have the results of His gracious purpose in perfection. If He justified us when evil and rebellious by the death of Christ, much more (now that we stand in a new and holy relationship where all is made good for us by and with God) shall we be saved by His life.

Notes on Romans 5:11

Yet there is another boast we have as believers, in virtue of Christ's death and resurrection; and it is infinite, though entered on already. It is not now simply in hope of the glory of God; nor is it in our tribulations, looking on to the end of the Lord in them and the consequent profit meanwhile. This had drawn out a most blessed unfolding of what God is. His love is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost given to us. He commends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us

There are consequences drawn; but they are not drawn from counsels about us, but from what He is, and has done for us when we were in our sins. There was no motive but in Himself; the objects of His love were the merest sinners. Hence we exult in much more than His ways with us, or the glorious hoped for result; “and not only [so], but also [we are] boasting in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we now received the reconciliation.”

Truly this is the climax: we exult in God! Higher we cannot go. In this we do boast through our Lord Jesus Christ. He has given us the most excellent gifts, but, better than all, Himself. For this, as for all the rest, we are indebted to Jesus; and we may even say, boldly yet most truly, that only through Jesus could God be what He is as the highest spring, ground, and object, of our boasting. “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him,” said the Savior, “God will glorify him in himself and will straightway glorify him.” “And not only so, but we glory in God through our Lord Jesus.” Blessed fruit above, yea and even below!

Through Him also now we received the reconciliation; for so the apostle wrote, not the propitiation, but the “reconciliation.” Without that mighty work of Christ on the cross we could not indeed, being sinners, be reconciled to God; but this is the theme here—the complete making good of our case with God with whom we had been at war, and from whom we were wholly estranged by our sins. In Rom. 3:25, we were shown how God justified us freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom He set forth a propitiatory (or mercy-seat) through faith in His blood. Thus He could be propitious spite of our sins which were fully met by the blood of Jesus. But the first half of chapter v. brings in His love and consequently the reconciliation, which we have now received through Christ, impossible without His atoning death, but going much farther in itself.

The chapters that follow can scarcely be thought to carry the soul into a deeper blessedness. Privileges are there very fully developed, security is more elaborately affirmed of the Christian in the face of adverse circumstances and enemies, in chapter viii. above all; but I know not that any joy even there rises up to the boasting in God we find here. It is at once the occasion for the heart both of the most profound repose and of the utmost spiritual activity. Worship is its expression. The outflow of the joy of the redeemed in the rest of God is thus anticipated. We begin the new song that will never end; and as it is here and now through our Lord Jesus, is it not so much the sweeter to our God? Thus the deepest inward poison that Satan insinuated into man at the fall is not merely counteracted but triumphed over to the praise of God, He thus acquires His due place; but it is such a place of trustful delight as never could have been for the creature save as the result

of Himself known as He is now by redemption—the God who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.

Notes on Romans 5:12

From this verse to the end of chapter 8, we have not so much a distinct portion of the Epistle as a needed and most weighty appendix to that which precedes. Hitherto the great truth of the remission of the believer's sins has been fully set forth, closing with the blessed privileges which belong to the justified man, but still in that connection—the expiatory efficacy of the blood of Jesus, and this displayed in His resurrection. Precious as it all is, it is not everything the believer wants. He may be miserable in the discovery of what he finds within himself; and if he know not the truth that applies to his difficulties on this score, he is in danger of yielding to hardness on one side, or of bearing a burdened spirit of bondage on the other. How many saints have never learned the extent of their deliverance, and go mourning from day to day under efforts which they would be the first to confess unavailing against their inward corruption! How many settle down callously balancing their faith in the forgiveness of their sins by the blood of Christ as a set-off against a plague which they suppose must needs be, and of course with no more power over it than those who are honestly but in vain struggling to get better. Neither the one nor the other understands the value to them of the sentence already executed on the old man in the cross, nor their own new place before God in Christ risen from the dead. This it is the Spirit's object to unfold in what follows.

“On this account, as by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death, and so death passed unto all men for that all sinned.” (Ver. 12.)

There is no need to reduce the apostle's language to a formal regularity. The utterance of the Spirit's mind, through a heart and understanding which felt its value as none ever did, clothed itself in a form more akin to that which was enunciated than man's rhetoric ever conceived. A broken sentence, with a long interruption following before the answer was given, suits the subject here, no less than the most parenthetic chapter in the scripture falls in with the task the apostle had in hand in Eph. 3. This coincidence of the remarkable form with the great facts and doctrines under discussion cannot be questioned even by those who see nothing beyond the fortuitous even in the Bible. Verses 13-17 form a digression that ends in meeting objections and helping on the argument; and then verse 18 resumes the matter of verse 12 under a more compact shape and furnishes the consequent of what was there introduced but left unfinished.

Nor does there seem to be any great difficulty in apprehending the propriety and bearing of particular phrases in this verse. The opening words have given rise to much needless and unintelligent questioning. The connection is as evident as it is important. God's love being the source, and Christ—the death and resurrection of Christ especially—the channel of redemption with such wondrous results to the believer, “on this account” (δι■ το■το), we are free to approach another side of this mighty and fruitful theme—the two heads with their respective families and the two natures of the believer, derived from Adam and Christ, with the relation of the Holy Ghost to all.

The last words have also been much debated. Undoubtedly the new subject is sin, the fallen estate of man, marked and closed by death, but there is no right reason to exclude from this and other expressions of the section the actual sinning of mankind. ■ϕ’ ■ does not mean “in whom;” nor is there warrant, while translating these words rightly, to add to the sentence that all died in the person of Adam. The point beyond all prominence is the way in which one man may affect the world. However preoccupied the Jew might be by the individual dealing of the law with each soul under it, it was impossible even for him to deny that such is the plain fact standing in the written word at the beginning of the world's sad moral history. Undoubtedly by one man sin, the thing sin, entered; and this at once broke up the ground on which all was then ordered. As it was rebellion against God, so was it fatal to man. Thereby death, the enemy so dreaded of man, came.

Thus the change most solemnly affecting the world came in long before the Jew existed or consequently before their boasted law was given. The Jew must look somewhere more largely, and accurately too, into the scriptures. He must not flatter his national vanity or religious pride with the delusion that all hinges either on Israel or their law. Adam was before them both and affects all mankind (the Jews not excepted). True, the momentous history that shows us how sin and death entered, is humbling indeed; but what will not the heart turn into a vaunt? At any rate, that incalculably grave event was outside the Jew in itself and in consequences far beyond them. It was not outside man, but contrariwise “by one man;” yet its effect, death, permeated the world.

But the apostle takes care to add to this one man's sin those of all others— “and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.” Thus the last clause is expressly to guard against the exclusion of the sins of men generally. We must therefore beware of enfeebling either side of the case. In the very scripture which opens the discussion of the universal bearing of Adam's sin on the human race (for it is no question here of Israel in particular), the connection of men's own sins with their death is carefully added. No one doubts that infants and idiots die, and this through Adam's sin; but the Spirit does not exclude the consequence where personal guilt can apply. The position of ruin to which the fall consigned the race is not severed from the evil workings of the nature now fallen in all men. Adam's sin is the cause but not the sole account and whole case of the bitter lot of man.

Now if one man according to God's word and consistently with His character and ways could plunge the world in death by sin, was it inconsistent with the true God by one man to bring in justification of life which addresses itself to all men. This the apostle proceeds to show elaborately and with divine precision in the verses that follow, which I will not further anticipate.

Notes on Romans 5:13-14

The parenthesis now begins. The apostle meets a possible objection, and certainly proves that the existence of sin is independent of law. “For until [the] law sin was in [the] world; but sin is not put to account when there is no law.” Thus the Jew could not even make the miserable boast (for what will not man boast of?) that the law preceded sin. The very object of law is to prove the sin of men. Alas! it is not confine d to Israel; it is universal. “Sin was in the world,” where the law was not. When it was given by Moses, it put sin to account; but sin was already there, and far more widely than the sphere which law contemplated when it came. Law could work no remedy for sinners; it could only register—not get rid of—sin. Law gave sin the character of offense; sin, where law spoke, became the transgression of a positive and known commandment. “Where no law is, there is no transgression.” It is a pernicious mistake to understand that the apostle denies sin to be where no law exists. Sin not the transgression of the law, though transgression assuredly is sin. But sin is a wider and deeper thing. The Authorized Version notwithstanding, 1 John 3:4 teaches really otherwise—that sin is lawlessness, and not necessarily the violation of law. Thus both apostles are restored to harmony, instead of either clashing mischievously or tempting an expositor to a still more mischievous paring down of the truth to save appearances. Never is this needed with scripture. As being the word of God, we must eschew and resent all such manipulations of its language. It is only our ignorance which finds difficulties; it is which sets one passage in antagonism to another. If John could have meant us to gather that sin and transgression of law are the same thing, nothing could save the statement from opposition to our text.

This is yet more apparent from the support the Apostle Paul adds in verse 14 of what was laid down in verse 13: “But death reigned from Adam to Moses even over those that sinned not in the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was coming.” The two points are named when a positive commandment was imposed by God. Adam had a law; by Moses the law was made known. Between them there was no dealing with men by either the one or the other; yet men sinned as scripture abundantly shows. Hence death reigned, for it is the wages (not of transgression only but) of sin. It reigned in the case of Adam and Eve; it reigned from Moses' day; but not at either epoch only, but between them, when there was no law. Death reigned over all those that sinned; for sin they did, even though it was not in the likeness of our first parents' transgression. Their antediluvian posterity, as well as those who followed the flood down to the gift of law from Sinai, could not sin as their parents in Eden or the children of Israel after they heard the ten words. But they sinned, they did their own will, they were corrupt and violent, as they afterward added idolatry to their evil ways. Accordingly death reigned even over them; for they were sinners, though not transgressors, like Adam at first and Israel afterward.

It is interesting to note that the apostle refers here to Hos. 6:7: “But they, like men, transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.” The margin gives the true sense, which is lost in the vagueness of “men” in the text. “They, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant.” Israel had the law, as Adam a law; and both transgressed the bond by which they were

held. But all between Adam and Moses were on a different footing. They were not a whit less truly sinners, but they had no law or laws proposed to them by God which they broke. So the nations in contrast with Israel are ever styled “sinners of the Gentiles.” Having sinned without law, they perished without law, while the Jews who had the law sinned in the law and were thus transgressors, which the Gentiles who have not the law could not be. But the Jews were not sinners only but transgressors. Hence it is written, “Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” The law put sin to their account. Not so with the Gentiles: God winked at these times of ignorance.

Nothing, however, is said of Gentiles in our verses, for we are here led up to times before the Jews were called, or the Gentiles consequently could be left aside. We see the sons of Adam down to the promulgation of God's law at Sinai. If on the one hand there was no law to charge sin to the account of the guilty, there was on the other hand the reign of death, and this over sinners, if not transgressors, even over those that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Men at large were guilty and died accordingly. We are here then in presence, not of the law and its special aims and its peculiar sphere, but of sin flowing down from its first source, Adam, through all the streams which descended thence. If law was not there to set sin to account, as it does precisely and in detail, their death was the witness that they were all sinners, whose sad wages were duly paid. Thus Adam, as we shall see more fully soon, is a figure of the coming One, of Christ (i.e., of a federal head who was to follow the first).

Notes on Romans 5:15-17

Having spoken of Adam as typical of Christ, the apostle at once proceeds to guard and clear the statement. The point of comparison is the bearing of a head on his family. He that believed the scripture (and every Jew was tenacious of the Pentateuch) must own that Adam's fall brought a condition of sin and a sentence of death on his descendants. Such was the sorrowful beginning of the Old Testament, such the key to the history of the race ever since. It was in vain then to make all a question of law. Not so: granted that what the law says it says to those under the law. The fact was plain that the fundamental book of the law shows a far deeper, wider, earlier principle, yea, so early that it embraces all the children of Adam from the first. Could any Jew deny the scripture, the facts, or the moral ground? It was certain then, and must be conceded by him who believed the first book of Moses that Adam's fall involved in universal ruin those who sprang from him; for he, while innocent, had no son His family headship was only after he sinned.

Now if it were a righteous dealing, as no Jew would dispute, so to involve a whole race in the consequences of what one man, their father, did amiss, Israel of all men should be the last to question the principle and the wondrous grace of God in the headship of the Lord Jesus. What Adam was to his descendants in evil and its consequences, Christ is in good to all who are His by faith. Thus the first man is a figure of the Second.

“But not as [is] the offense, so also the free gift; for if by the offense of the one the many died, much more the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ abounded unto the many.” (Ver. 15.) Thus the apostle qualifies the analogy. The difference is an immense advantage on the side of good. How could it be otherwise with such a source of goodness as God, and with such a channel and ground and object as the man Christ Jesus? To punish, smite, destroy, was a grief, so to speak, to God; to bless is His delight, and now to the full, since Christ has made it righteous by the removal of all hindrances. The superior dignity of Christ and the exhaustless fountain of God's grace of which He was the expression secure the vast preponderance for the free gift, as against the offense.

Nor is it a difference of measure only but of kind. “And not as by one having sinned [is] the gift; for the judgment [was] from one unto condemnation, but the free gift from many offenses unto justification.” (Ver. 16.) The people or parties affected were before us in verse 15; the things which indicate it are prominent here. In the former contrast “the many” were respectively made to depend on “the one,” though “much more” for those in relation to Christ. In the contrast before us one act on the part of the head that sinned sentenced into condemnation; whereas the free gift, spite of many offenses, was for a state of accomplished righteousness.

And this he confirms by the overflowing results in the next verse 17: “For if by the offense of the one death reigned by the one, much more they that receive the abundance of the grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by the one, Jesus Christ.” Thus the result is triumphant, and this not only for men dead by sin, but also for those that had the aggravation of offenses under law. Believers being Christ's, let them have been what they may, Gentile no less than Jewish,

receive abundance of grace and of the free gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by the one Jesus Christ. It is not merely that life is to reign, in contrast with death, but they shall reign in life through Christ. Calvin thinks these two equivalent; what is said is really far more blessed. For faith the contrast of grace with the first man always exceeds. If the balance is not so exact in rhetoric, the believer may enjoy so much the more the precious affluence of the word and the Spirit now, as he will the crowning blessedness in glory by and by.

It is evidently an argument drawn from the righteous governmental ways of God to His grace. If looking at Adam, the head of nature, it was worthy of Him not to limit the consequences of sin to him who fell, surely it was much more worthy to extend the effects of grace according to His own nature and the glory of Christ from Him who rose to all who derived their life from such a source! and this whether we consider the objects (ver. 15), the circumstances (ver. 16), or the results. (Ver. 17.)

Chapter 219

Notes on Romans 5:18-19

The argument is now resumed from verse 12, but strengthened by the parenthetical instruction of verses 13-17. This both enforced the analogy between Adam and Christ for evil and good over those who pertain to them respectively, and also pointed out the enormous preponderance of good over evil in Christ, as is but due to the glory of His person and the grace of His work. If the one by a single offense involved all that were his in death, the other brings blessing to His family, spite of countless offenses.

“So then as by one offense [the bearing was] unto all men unto condemnation, so also by one accomplished righteousness unto all men unto justifying of life. For as by the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many shall be constituted righteous.” (Ver. 18, 19.)

There is no reasonable doubt that the marginal correction of our English Bible (“by one offense") should be adopted, in preference to the text— “by one man's offense,” however weighty and from various sides the names which have espoused the latter. The Sinai Manuscript actually inserts ■υθρ■που here, as we find in some minuscules also. But this is an unquestionable error. The point of the verse, as it appears to me, was to present the direction respectively, apart from the actual issues, whether on Adam's part or on Christ's. Hence the strikingly elliptic, as well as the broadly characteristic, form of verse 18. There is no need (as in the Authorized Version) to bring in κρ■μα or χ■ρισμα from the parenthesis. If we understand ■γ■νετο [it was], this suffices, though we may conform the phrase more to English ears by saying “the bearing was.” But it is more to maintain the idea of direction here by giving ε■ς the force of “unto,” “for,” or “towards” rather than “upon,” which is more suited to convey the notion of the definitive effect or result. This, we shall see, it is the object of the following verse 19 to supply, and in contradistinction from verse 18. And as has been observed by another, this is confirmed by chapter iii. 22 where we have two classes distinguished—ε■ς π■ωτας, κα■ ■π■ π■ντας το■ς πιστε■οντας (easily merged into one δ■ ■μοιοτ■λευτον or the double occurrence of π■ωτας, whereas it is hardly possible to conceive one clause enlarged into two). Here the distinctive force of ε■ς and ■π■ is plain: the former gives the bearing of God's righteousness by faith of Jesus Christ “unto all” (and so the gospel is preached to every creature); the latter gives the result (and, as we know the gospel has its blessed effect “upon all those that believe,” and upon them only).

The meaning, then, I conceive to be that “as through one offense” all men were threatened with condemnation; so through one accomplished righteousness all had the door opened unto a justifying (not by blood alone, but) of life in Christ risen from the dead. But therein we see only the native tendency, on one side of Adam's act, and on the other of Christ's, without taking the modification of God's effectual grace or of man's persistent unbelief.

Accordingly, verse 19 is requisite to complete this part of the subject. “For as by one man's disobedience the many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of the one shall the many be constituted righteous.” It is the final result which is here contemplated; and as this is certainly

and necessarily limited to the household of faith, it would have been false to have said π■ντας “all” in the last clause. For it is not a question in any of these verses of merely raising the dead just and unjust, as many divines in old and modern times have unintelligently imagined. For the vast majority of mankind, dying in unbelief, must rise for a resurrection of judgment, which is as far removed as it is possible for facts and words to make it from justification or justifying of life.

First the scope, and then the result of Adam's position and of Christ's are here set before us and explained by the Holy Spirit. As it is certain from Scripture that not all men but only such as are Christ's have life, eternal life, and are justified by faith, so in this verse, devoted to the presentation of the result, it was not possible to adopt a larger term, common to the two heads (the disobedient and the obedient), than “the many” or “the mass” (ο■ π■λλοι) identified with each. In point of fact the Adam party, according to nature and for some time, embraces the whole human race; and therefore in this way “the many” in the first clause of verse 19 may be said to answer to “all men” in verse 18. But this I must be forgiven for considering a superficial method of solving the question, and altogether unwarrantable as applied to both classes. The second ο■ π■λλοι is unequivocally and exclusively “the children” given to Christ and in no possible sense humanity as actually saved and recovered. They are not identical with the “all men” of the verse before; for there it was but the gracious aspect of the work of Christ, and therefore not (as some say) all men who receive and embrace its truth, but universal. Here it is the positive effect, and so restricted to those who believe (i. e., those who live before Christ, as the preceding ο■ π■λλοι derive their being from fallen Adam). There is no “total” in this verse, but “the [known] many” in relation to “the one” definite person who represented each his own company. It is not the same total in the two verses, nor is there any total expressed in the latter of them. As the ruin of Adam went to destroy all the race, so the work of Christ goes out for the blessing of all. As in fact the Adam mass were constituted sinners through his disobedience, so by Christ's obedience His own are constituted righteous. Here all is explicit result, and not character; and hence the article is used in Greek as pointedly as the preceding verse exhibited the anarthrous construction: in both cases with the utmost accuracy, and with a perfection altogether admirable, with which no writings of man can compare. Where the apostle speaks of “all men,” the aim is to show the tendency whether from the first man or from the Second; where he speaks of “the many,” the definitive effect is set before us.

Thus Calvinism and Arminianism are both at fault; and the truth conveyed is larger than the one and more definite than the other, refusing the fetters of human system, and yet exhibiting a precise as well as an infinite character, being the revealed truth of God.

Chapter 220

Notes on Romans 5:20-21

Thus the doctrine of headship, and of a race or family depending on the head for evil or good, has been distinctly laid down; and Adam and Christ stand confronted as those respectively under whom all ultimately must be classed. This necessarily brought in a wholly different principle from the law which is necessarily individual in its character and claims from each under itself what he must do if he pretends to stand for himself before God. But the apostle does not close this part of the subject without a notice of the relative place of the law. Since he introduced the theme of sin, as distinguished from sins, in connection with the two heads, he had only alluded to the law negatively to show that sin is a deeper question than law, and, so far from depending on it, existed before it: only it is not put to account when no law exists.

Now we are told what was the true object of law. The Jew, and all Judaizers, at once assume that it could be for nothing else than righteousness. Alas! the blindness of man at his best estate where human thoughts prevail, and not the understanding of the revealed mind of God. But he is fallen; and fallen man thinks as highly of himself as meanly of Christ. Nothing but this can account for the perverse ingenuity with which, even in spite of the blessed light of the gospel, the truth as to this is eluded and opposed. What can be plainer than the inspired statement? “But law came in that the offense might abound.” One can see how it is that men dislike a sentence which annihilates their moral ground; but it is an astonishing proof of the deleterious effects of theology that Christian men can uphold their false systems of thought against such words of inspiration.

Every word is uttered with the greatest accuracy. Thus the apostle speaks of the legal state of things, and hence employs the word νμος, “law,” here as in verse 13 without the article. It is clearly the Mosaic law that is in question; yet if it be, Middleton allows that the rejection of the article is not here authorized by any of the canons (i.e., of his own treatise). And this is true. The case is one which demonstrates the defectiveness of his theory. Even in verse 13 the preposition has nothing to do with the true solution; and his notion, though still followed by very many scholars, that the use or non-use of the article is a license after prepositions, is a total fallacy. It may call for more nicety of observation to account for cases with certain prepositions, but nothing more. The regular usage, with or without prepositions, is to present a phrase in the anarthrous form wherever a characteristic state is meant rather than a fact or an abstraction. So here it was the state of things when God gave His law through Moses to Israel which enters the discussion; and, hence, νμος (not ν.) was the correct form. Again, the reasoning of Macknight is of no force; for it is not the point whether the Mosaic law was ushered into the world with pomp and notoriety, or privily. Not the historical fact, but the resulting state is here meant. Further, there is no need to take παρεισλθεν as necessarily implying an entrance by stealth or privily. The true idea appears to be that the legal state came in by the by. It was neither the original state, in which man was made, nor is it the final condition to which he is destined. It came in not directly, but ancillarily, for a special though subordinate purpose, between the entrance of sin and the coming of the Savior. Hence law in the abstract is uncalled for, even if the phrase would admit of it. But this is carefully excluded, quite as much as giving prominence to the objective historical fact, which also

would be out of place.

But law, the legal state, came in by the way in order that the offense might abound. The sense is not that sin might abound: God is in no way or degree its author. Sin, as had been already shown, was in the world, quite independently of law and before it was given by Moses. But law came in, that the offense might abound; that, sin being already there, its evil might be made manifest and horrible by taking the shape of open contempt of God's known authority. This was worthy of God and wholesome for man. And such was the object and issue of the legal state. Sin, I repeat, was not created by it; but it was provoked by the restraint put on its gratification: the very presence of God's revealed claim on man's conscience made the offense to abound. The evil of man was there and at work; and the expression and authoritative demand of his duty only drew out unmistakably what was at work. Self-will only the more chafes, the more it is subjected to an authority which opposes its every desire. But this is the truth of man's moral state; and it is good, as far as it goes, that he should know the truth about himself.

There is no reason therefore to escape from the plain and certain meaning of these inspired words. Chrysostom was wrong in this, and has misled thousands. He denied that the apostle spoke of intention or aim, but only of result, and fell into the error of saying that the law was given, not that the offense might abound, but to diminish and take it away. This was to contradict the apostle, not to expound him.

So, again, Macknight asks if one can imagine that no offense abounded in the world which could be punished with death till the law of Moses was promulgated? and that grace did not superabound till the offense against the law abounded? He therefore argues for “the law of Nature,” which silently entered the moment Adam and Eve were reprieved. What can be more distressing than this confusion?

It must be evident to him who believes the word of God, and understands His dealings ever so little, that between the fall and the promulgation of the law at Sinai was precisely the time when men were left to prove what flesh is without the restraint of law; that then Israel became the proof that a legal state did not in itself mend matters, but caused the offense to abound. So the apostle instructs us in this chapter, the truth of which is otherwise apparent in the facts of the Old Testament and the condition of Israel.

“But where sin abounded, grace far exceeded; that, as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Here too it is impossible to conceive language more apposite or precise. The apostle does not say, it will be noticed, where “the offense” abounded; for this would limit the sphere to the area of the legal state. All that wherein a Jew boasted was the causing the offense to abound. What a withering of pride without an exaggeration or an effort! But grace went out in its triumph far beyond that narrow bound of law; it went out into the world where, sinful man lay, not to Israel only. “Where sin abounded, grace far exceeded.” And grace too had its characteristic purpose, or God rather by it. What was this? “That as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Here if anywhere is an aim and issue which do honor even to God and His Son. In presence of such a gospel we are not ashamed, but boast. To boast of law is to boast of what condemns and kills, for it makes the offense to abound. Of grace we may

and ought to boast. God delights in it. It came, as did truth, by Christ Jesus who is full of both. And specially may we boast, that grace reigned. Had law reigned, what must have been our just doom! But grace reigns (not without but) through righteousness; for the work of redemption is done, and God justifies in consequence according to His sense of its worth. Thus it is not more surely a fountain of grace than a righteous ground and channel. And hence the issue is according to God; it is eternal life, and this through Jesus Christ our Lord. He is risen from the dead, and gives life more abundantly. All is thus as secure as it is perfect. God is glorified as He should be; and this, as it ought to be, through the only One, even Jesus, who has retrieved all and turned by His death and resurrection even sin itself into an occasion of such a glorifying of God, and such a blessing of the believer, as could never else have been. These are the ways, and this the victory, of grace through our Lord Jesus.

Notes on Romans 6:1-4

That grace should so triumphantly rise above sin, even where sin abounded most, leads to the various objections of unbelief and the answers of the Holy Spirit for our furtherance and joy of faith. Grace in no way slights sin. From first to last Christianity and evil are proved to be incompatible.

“What then shall we say? Let us continue in sin that grace may abound? Let it not be. We who died to sin, how shall we still live in it? Are ye ignorant that as many of us as were baptized unto Christ Jesus were baptized unto his death? Therefore we were buried with him by baptism unto death, that, as Christ was raised from among [the] dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Is this then the deduction from the gospel of God? May we continue in sin, in order that His grace may be the more richly displayed? Away with such a thought. But here the apostle deals with the wicked inference or imputation, not from its intrinsic heinousness, nor from its reflection on the character of God, as in chapter 3:8, but from its flat contradiction of Christianity in its first principles. It is not again a motive drawn from the sense we have of our Savior's love; it is not here a question how can we so wound His heart or grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

The apostle replies from the starting-point of each confessor of Christ. Not merely did He die for our sins, laying us under an infinite obligation, but we died to sin: how then shall we longer live in it? This is the meaning of our baptism. Are you ignorant of so plain a truth? It is not some special quality of blessing that is the privilege of a few Christians only; it is the common property of all the baptized. As many of us as were baptized unto Christ Jesus were baptized unto His death.

Thus is laid down clearly and beyond question the fundamental truth that not more surely did Christ die for us, than we died to sin in His death. Our baptism sets forth this as well as that. The conclusion is inevitable: “We were buried then with him by baptism unto death, that, as Christ was raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Let us weigh the immense importance of this truth stated with the simplicity and the force characteristic of a divine revelation.

Evangelicalism (whether in national or dissenting bodies) takes its stand (at least it used to do so) on the truth of Christ dying for our sins. This is most true, and a capital truth; without which there is no bringing of the soul to God, no divine judgment of our iniquities, no possible sense of pardon. But it is very far from being the truth even of the Savior's death, to speak of no more now. Hence evangelicalism, as such, having no real apprehension of our death in Christ, never understands the force and place of baptism, is habitually infirm as to Christian walk, and is apt to take the comfort of forgiveness by the blood of Christ so as to mix with the world and enjoy the life that now is, often helping on the delusion of ameliorating man and improving Christendom.

Mysticism on the other hand, whether Catholic or Protestant, dissatisfied with the worldly ease and self-complacency of the evangelicals, is ever pining after a deeper reality, but seeks it within. Hence the continual effort of the pietist school is to die to self and so to enjoy God, unless perhaps with the few who flatter themselves that they have arrived at such a state of perfection as they can rest in. But for the mass, and I suppose indeed all whose conscience retains its activity, they never go beyond godly desires and inward strainings after holiness. They cannot dwell consciously in God's love to them as a settled fact known in Christ, producing self-forgetfulness in presence of His own perfect grace which made Christ to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The system tends even in its fairest samples to turn the eye inwardly in a search after a love which may aspire to resemble as closely as possible the love of God, and so satisfy itself with the hope of a life ever higher and higher. Hence pious sentimentalism, which is little more than imagination at work in religion, is the prevailing character here.

Thus the ground the apostle here insists on is ignored by evangelicals and mystics; and indeed in Christendom at large it is excluded by its legalism and ordinances as decidedly as by rationalism. They are all, in every part, judged by the simple elementary truth couched under and expressed in baptism, that the Christian is dead to sin. To teach that we ought to die to sin is well meant, but it is not the truth, and therefore can but deeply injure the soul in its true wants. The true view is, no doubt, the reverse of death in sin; it is death to sin. Grace gives us this blessed portion—gives it now in this world from the commencement of our career—gives it once for all as the one baptism recognizes. Hence the Christian is false to the primary truth he confesses who should live still in sirs. In his baptism he owns he died in Christ. He is bound to walk accordingly—as one already and always dead to sin.

Is there then no mortification? no practical carrying out of death in Christ? Unquestionably. It is the constant duty of the Christian; but then, mark well the difference—Christian practice consists, not in our dying to sin, but in our putting to death our members which are on the earth, even the various lusts of the old man. In his baptism, the believer openly renounces all hope of himself or the first man; nor does Ile, like a Jew, merely hope for a Messiah to be born and reign on the throne of David. In baptism, He confesses His death, and his own death therein—not only his sin but its end in the death of Christ. If we had not another life, who could thus give up his own life as dead? Yet what is attested in baptism is not life but death—our death to sin in Christ's death—which we could not do save as living through Him.

Thus it is as different from Jewish ground as from that of the Gentiles who know not God, some of whose sages in West as well as East have tried to die to sin. The distinctive Christian ground is that, as baptized unto Christ's death, we died to in from the commencement of our career. “We were buried then with him in baptism unto death, that, even as Christ was raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.” It is a poor interpretation to take the Father's glory as equivalent to His almightiness or power. Every motive which animates Him morally, every way and end whereby He is set forth in His perfections, all that goes forth in excellence and delight, not toward the creature only but His Son, was exercised in raising up the Lord Jesus. After such a standard are we too called to walk in newness of life. It is no longer a question of original creation, still less of fallen Adam, but of Christ, who is the life of which by grace we live; and He is risen. May we walk accordingly!

Chapter 222

Notes on Romans 6:5-11

The apostle carries out the comparison of our blessing after the pattern of Christ to actual resurrection. “For if we have become united in nature with the likeness of his death, we shall be also [with that] of his resurrection, knowing this that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin. For he that died has been justified from sin.”

Resurrection, as far as we are concerned, is a matter of hope. We have part with Christ in His death; we shall have in resurrection also for our bodies. Meanwhile, we, as alive through Him risen, have all the benefit of His death as a power delivering from sin. Our old man we know to be crucified with Him. Without this the root of evil had not been dealt with, nor consequently had we against self that weapon of divine temper which a God of resurrection puts in our hands. Nor is it a feeling, a consciousness of death, which might only minister to self-satisfaction. It is a fact objectively known, though only within the ken of faith: knowing (γιν■σκοντες) this, &c. Thus only as a practical means can the body of sin come to naught, that we should no more be slaves to it. Here the point of need is liberty from sin to do the holy will of God for those who were only slaves of sin. There is no other way, though when we take this the path of faith, there is much to help us along the road. If I have died, it is evident that there is no longer a question of sinning. A dead man cannot sin more; and the Christian is given to know himself dead in Christ's death that he may henceforth enjoy this quittance from the power of sin. How can one dead be charged with going on in sin? For he that died (■ποθ■νων, the completed act), has been justified (δεδικα■ωται, the subsisting effect of the past action) from sin. It is a deliverance worthy of God both in His wisdom and in His holiness; and as it is of grace, so it is by faith.

Hence verse 8 repeats the conclusion as to the future which follows from the death and resurrection of Christ. “Now if we died with Christ, we believe we shall also live with him.” Our condition when actually risen is once more anticipated and rehearsed. “Knowing that Christ being raised from among [the] dead dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him.” It is interesting to note the difference here. We only know because we are taught it, as a truth outside us, that our old man has been crucified with Christ. It is not really, what so many would like to make it, a matter of subjective experience; for this would flatter the flesh in its pious frames and aspirations, instead of honoring the grace of God in the death of Christ. On the other hand we have the inward conscious knowledge (ε■δ■τες) that Christ, being risen, dies no more: death has no more dominion over Him. It is not a mere outward fact of knowledge: we feel from our soul that so it is and must be. Sin never had dominion over Him, but death had, that God might be glorified, sin judged, Satan's power abolished, and we delivered.

“For in that he died, he died to sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth to God.” Life has now the victory, so much the more strikingly and conspicuously because that death seemed to gain it at first. Thus as sin never had the least advantage, so death has lost its claim through His bowing to it and thus securing our freedom who have part in His death. If sin's wages are death, what a gain

to us His death has been who, personally without sin, was made sin by God for us, as truly as we became the righteousness of God in Him.

Not of course that on the cross He was not as holy as in all that preceded it; but He gave Himself to be judicially treated according to all that was imputed to Him, and for which in grace He became responsible. In nothing did He spare Himself; in nothing did God, who forsook Him thus identified with our sin and all its consequences under divine judgment, that we might come out free. By dying all was ended; and we, having our part with Him, have done with sin. “So also do ye reckon yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” We are entitled so to reckon ourselves; we ought to do so; we wrong the death and resurrection of Christ if we do not account ourselves thus dead to sin and alive to God in Him—a great and wondrous boon to those who delight to have an end of sin, a real if but a small part of Christianity, yet even this, I may say, ignored in Christendom, its force misunderstood, its joy untasted.

Chapter 223

Notes on Roman 6:12-14

It is to be observed that verse 11 carries the subject beyond the reasoning of verse 8, where our living with Christ is shown to be a just and sure consequence for the believer: if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. It is future. But now we have a weighty, present result founded on what intervenes, especially verse 10. Christ died to sin once and lives to God; and He is the life as well as the resurrection. As thus alive to God, all closed as to sin in His death, we live of His life, and are thus also to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God, not here with Him, but through or in virtue of (el') Him. This epistle never, in its doctrinal province, goes so far as union with Him, though it does employ the truth of the body to enforce the right use of spiritual gifts on Christians. In the Epistle to the Ephesians we are shown to be quickened together with Christ and raised up together with Him. Here however we are alive to God in Him.

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that ye should obey its lusts.” (Ver. 12.) The truth is then, not that sin is dead, but that we are entitled by Christ's death and resurrection to regard ourselves in the account of faith as dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign. It is personified here as elsewhere sometimes, seeking the upper hand in our mortal body so as to subject us to its lusts. But through Christ it has no claim over us. As He lives to God who died to sin once for all, so also we are to reckon ourselves done with the dominion of sin and not to obey its lusts. As dead to sin we owe it no allegiance whatever.

Nor is this all. The apostle pushes the matter farther. “Neither yield your members instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but yield yourselves to God as alive from out of dead men, and your members instruments of righteousness to God.” (Ver. 13.) The first occurrence of “yield” means in the form of the word, the habit of yielding; the second, by its form, implies the surrender already made. It is not a gradual improvement of the nature or the will as men speak, but the giving up of ourselves in a single and complete act to God as alive from among the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness to God.

This is the new place of positive blessing given to us, counting ourselves thus by faith. Such is the present practical consequence, as we have seen also what is future for us. “For sin shall not have dominion over you” —not sin as a personified ruler now, but no sin in any shape or measure; “for ye are not under law but under grace.” (Ver. 14.) This closes the foregoing discussion and prepares for a new step taken in the argument following.

What a blessed comfort thus far and how uncompromisingly laid down in the very portion that refutes the flesh's misuse of God's mercy and of the Christian's liberty! “Ye are not under law, but under grace.”

It is painful to see how those who profess to believe the gospel, valuing both Christ and His work, elude the force of His word, and essay to foist on the Christian subjection to law, which the Spirit is here flatly negativing. The law is the strength of sin; for by its restraint and interdict it simply provokes the flesh. It never gives power of holiness any more than life: grace, not law, quickens,

saves, and strengthens. If believers could be under law, sin must have dominion over them.

It is in vain to say that the apostle is here treating of our being accounted righteous in Christ. Not so: he is discussing the walk of the Christian in answer to the cavil that grace tends to sanction lax ways. It is a question therefore of a rule of life, of its principle and spring. The objectors then as now had fallen into the error of supposing that the law, though unable to give the remission of sins, is the rule of righteousness for the Christian. Justification from sin, not from sins, is the point in hand, and as the blood of Christ washes away the sins of the believer in the sight of God, so he is cleansed from sin; not simply by Christ's dying for him, but by his dying with Christ. For he that died is justified from sin. The nature is in question, and consequently the walk of the believer; and the remedy here, as everywhere, is in Christ; but it is in death with Him of which baptism is the sign.

Nor can there be a less holy doctrine than the notion so prevalent among the Puritans as well as others still less intelligent and with less godly desire, that the death of Christ has taken away the condemnatory power of the law for faith, but left the Christian under it as a directory of his ways. A law which can no longer condemn departure from itself or those guilty of it is nugatory. It is of the essence of law not only to prescribe duty but to condemn any and every infraction of its requirements. Hence our apostle teaches elsewhere, “as many as are of the works of the law” (i.e., as many people as are on the ground or principle of works of law, not merely as many as have broken the law) “are under the curse.”

It is false doctrine, then, and really Antinomian in its basis, that the law has lost its sting or condemnatory power for those under it. Such is not the boon of redemption. The law is not dead. It retains all its force against the wicked, as the apostle shows. It is not an evil thing but excellent, when used lawfully; but it is unlawfully imposed on the righteous and holy. The Christian, even if he had been a Jew, is not under law, but under grace; and this not by the death of law, which cannot be and ought not to be, but by his own death with Christ. As a dead man can sin no more, so the law does not apply to one viewed as dead. Such is God's way of considering the Christian, not only atoned for but dead with Christ; and faith considers him who possesses it as God does. Thus the law remains inviolable; and the deliverance of the Christian consists not in the weakening or even mitigation of the law, but in the change of place which grace gives. The believer died with Christ, and is thus justified from sin and freed from law. Nebuchadnezzar's furnace did not burn the less, though the three Hebrews were preserved unscathed. The curse fell on Christ crucified; the believer is in Christ risen. “There is therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”

Notes on Romans 6:15-18

Verse 15 puts a new question. It is no longer, as in verse 1, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may exceed?” This is the primary objection to grace for Christians just delivered from the ruin of the first man. Moral relaxation is dreaded, if where sin abounded, grace still more exceeded. It was met by counter questions which prove that grace does not merely help by motive against sin, but delivers the believer from it by that most decisive and ultimate weapon, even death. How shall we that died to sin live any longer in it? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto his death? Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism unto death.... He that died is justified from sin. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign. Such is the apostle's argument in answer to the first question.

“What then? are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? Let it not be.” (Ver. 15.) Thus his second question is not answered by our death with Christ. That we cannot live longer in sin is conclusively set aside by the fact that we died to sin with Christ and therefore are not to abide in it. All this sinful first Adam life is closed to us, both for the future in resurrection and for the present in the part we have with Christ for our souls. Christ dead and risen is the pattern for faith; His death is the principle of present deliverance from the reign of sin. But do we not need a mighty spring to move, and cheer, and strengthen us along the way of the Lord? Unquestionably we do; and this is none other than grace. Nothing else could keep the believer from yielding his members as implements of unrighteousness to sin, nothing else could enable him to act consistently with that surrender of himself, once for all, to God and of his members as implements of righteousness to God, which is characteristic of the Christian. And we are under grace, the power for holiness, as the Jew was under law, the strength of the sin he was so slow to feel and confess. And therefore sin, which for the present has absolutely governed the chosen nation, shall not lord it over the Christian. May we then sin because we are not under law that condemns, but under God's free unmerited favor that imputes no sin, but justifies and saves? Far be it from us. Is it thus we would or could use our liberty? What could be more base? If I am by Christ thus freed, for what, for whom, shall I use my freedom? “Know ye not that to what ye yield yourselves bondmen to obey, ye are bondmen to what ye obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness? “ (Ver. 16.)

This again is another characteristic of Christianity. Christ makes the soul, once the slave of sill, to be free, and calls it to stand fast in His liberty, never again to be held in a yoke of bondage. For there is no middle ground or other alternative. But grace uses this liberty to be so much the more His bondman, free from sin to serve the Lord Christ. It was precisely what He did here below, evermore the true and perfect servant. Into this love always leads. With Him we have communion in this, and in order to express its absoluteness we, however free from our old slavery, are said to be bondmen of Jesus, His will and work, or, as suits the argument here, “of obedience unto righteousness.” The Christian's righteousness is never doing things because they are right, which is pride, independence, or deification of self, but because they are God's will for us. We must obey

in order to practical righteousness. How complete the change from all we were! “But thanks to God that ye were bondmen of sin, but ye obeyed from [the] heart [the] form of teaching into which ye were delivered.” (Ver. 17.)

Man does not suffice for himself; for he is but a creature and therefore necessarily dependent on God. If he seeks to be his own master, if he affects independence, he only falls the more thoroughly under Satan; and, instead of obeying God, he becomes the slave of sin. From this servitude redemption delivers the believer, but only to bind him heartily (and so much the more because under grace, not law) to do as the Christian form of teaching instructs us; for obedience is always according to, and measured by, the relationship in which we stand. Legal obedience, if practicable, is not that which grace produces, which is in unison with the truth in Christ—that mold, as it were, into which the believer is cast.

Such then is the character and effect of Christian deliverance and the vital connection which we shall see more fully afterward between redemption by Christ and life in Him. “Being made free from sin ye became enslaved to righteousness.” (Ver. 18.) Two masters no man can serve. Freed from sin, we are now indissolubly bound to righteousness. Grace is the only power for righteousness. The law defined and demanded that measure and form of righteousness which God could not but exact from man in the flesh. But grace, under which the Christian is, makes good in his practice what we have been taught since Christ is revealed. Thus the very fact that God does not impute iniquity to the believer encourages and fortifies him in willing self-surrender to the Lord, instead of simply provoking sin and condemning the sinner as law did and could do nothing else. Under grace we are free, but withal servants. Freed from sin, we become bondmen to righteousness. Such is the effect of our hearty obedience of the gospel.

As the first question of our chapter, then, is met by the great fact of God's judgment of the old man and deliverance of the Christian by the death and resurrection of Christ, as he confesses his own death with Christ (witnessed in baptism from the starting-point of Christianity), so the second is an appeal to his motives as set free according to the liberty of grace. Is he going to use it for sinning? No! as the power of sin is the law (1 Cor. 15), grace is the power of holiness and makes him who is under it a more devoted bondman of righteousness to the God who imputes no sin, than the law even asked, but never obtained, with all its rewards and penalties: why this is will appear fully and definitely in chapter vii., where the special question of man under law, even though converted and indeed only as converted, is brought to issue.

Chapter 225

Notes on Romans 6:19-23

For having spoken of the Christian as enslaved to righteousness, the apostle hastens to excuse his language. He had shown the impossibility of a middle place, maintaining the absoluteness of the surrender to God, which is made good in the heart and ways of the believer; he had characterized the new relation as one of bondage to righteousness. This required explanation; for in truth it is real, and the only real, liberty of heart; yet is the bond none the less firm and thorough. “I speak after a human sort on account of the weakness of your flesh; for as ye yielded your members in bondage to uncleanness and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now yield your members to righteousness unto holiness.” (Ver. 19.) Their former estate manifested its corruption and willfulness increasingly. Evil ripens and waxes worse and worse. Willing service issues not only in a just appreciation of our relative place to God and man, but in an ever deepening sense of separation to God. To this the saints are exhorted. The life is exercised and progress is looked for. Righteousness is here the practical maintenance of our responsibility according to the relation in which we now stand to God (our mere creature-place as of the first Adam being closed by death). Holiness is the intrinsic delight of the new life in good and its abhorrence of evil, according to God as revealed in Christ.

“For when ye were bondmen of sin, ye were free to righteousness. What fruit had ye then at that time? [Things] of which ye are now ashamed. For the end of those things [is] death.” (Ver. 20, 21.) There seems to be a grave but cutting irony in this allusion to their old condition, when the only freedom they knew was in respect to righteousness. They were slaves of sin and had nothing to do with righteousness. And what was the result? Nothing to boast of certainly: how much to fill these representatives with shame! And what is the end of those things? Death.

Here then we stand on the ground of motives which test the heart. It is no longer, as at the beginning of the chapter, a great fact which is true of the Christian because he has a part with Christ in His death, and so is dead to sin and lives to God. It is an appeal to his appreciation of the grace of God which has freed him from his slavery to sin. To what account and use then is he going to turn his freedom? What was the fruit of his old life when he was free enough in relation to righteousness? Nothing, as far as he was concerned, but a source of present shame, save death the end.

How admirable is the wisdom of the inspired word! The sense of grace thus corrects the otherwise inevitable effect of the light of God, cast on the past and the present and the future: for if it were possible that a soul should be awakened to a just sense of its sinfulness and then left with earnest desires to serve God, to a new life, battling with its own evil, how occupied with self must be the whole of its experience! Alas! so it is too deeply as well as extensively among real children of God, who imperfectly know the blessed consequences for them of the work of Christ. They are not redeemed to be put under law, but contrariwise under grace. Saved by grace, they stand in grace. And this is the strongest motive to the renewed mind, the most fatal snare to the hypocritical professor, the ready objection of the natural mind, which sees the latter without being able to

estimate the former.

“But now freed from sin, and made bondmen to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end life eternal.” Observe the relation of grace. It is not slaves to the law, but bondservice to God. Man in flesh was tried by the ten words; but they were too weighty for his weakness, and only riveted a chain of judgment on his guilt. But now, emancipated by the death and resurrection of Christ, received by faith, having the life of Hint risen from the dead as well as redemption—the forgiveness of sins, we are freed from sin and enslaved to God. Hence follows not a mere test by certain commands, but subjection to Himself who speaks to us by all His word. Every part of scripture has His authority to our souls: only we must learn by the Spirit its just application; and this, holding fast our association with Christ, no longer as in the first Adam. It is clear that this both gives a more intimate relation to God, and opens a boundless sphere in which Our obedience is to be exercised.

Nor is it only subjection to God, which takes the place of the Jewish position under law; but, thus walking, we have our “fruit unto holiness, and the end life eternal.” Such is the pathway here, and such its crown in glory by and by. There is growth in the value of good and its issue in the attracted separation of the heart from evil to God; and the end is suited to the way, though surely according to the personal dignity of Christ, and that which alone meets the character and counsels of God.

“For the wages of sin [is] death; but the free gift of God life eternal in Christ Jesus our Lord.” This is a summary of the general truth; it is the result on man's side and on God's. He does not limit it to transgression, though of course its wages are no less; he takes man, the Gentile sinner, as well as the Jewish transgressor. Both were sinners; and the wages of sin is death. But the blessing is quite as rich and free: eternal life is the need of the Jew no less than of the Gentile: it is God's free gift, and thus equally open to either or both. Let it be carefully noted that the Holy Spirit, by the structure of the phrase, carefully avoids intimating that the wages of sin are limited to death; for in truth judgment remains, and is appointed to man no less than death. Together they are the full wages of sin. Nor would it be safe to affirm that even eternal life exhausts the free gift of God; for, as we shall find in chapter viii., no less than in many scriptures more, He gives the Holy Ghost to be the portion of the believer, not to speak of the relation of son and the accompanying inheritance. Boundless indeed is His grace to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Notes on Romans 7:1-6

The apostle had already laid down that sin should not have dominion over the Christian, because he is not under law but under grace. He now unfolds the relations of the believer, even had he been a Jew, to the law; and this he does with admirable wisdom which the mass of his best expositors that it has been my lot to see, not to speak of others, have failed to appreciate.

“Or are ye ignorant, brethren, for I speak to [men] knowing law, that the law has dominion over the man as long time as he lives? For the married woman is bound to the living husband by law; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband.” (Ver. 1, 2.) Thus death is the grand principle, as with sin, so with law. It is indeed a confessed and universal axiom. It was fitting to take up the woman rather than the man, because he is treating of our responsibility to do the will of the Lord; and it is emphatically the woman's place to obey her husband. But this, as he demonstrates, is quite independent of the law, which simply deals with man alive in the flesh. Now his thesis in the preceding chapter was the death of the Christian with Christ, which is no less true and forcible when applied to the law as to sin. During the husband's life the wife is bound; if he have died, she is quit. Death severs the bond. “Therefore then, while the husband liveth, she shall be called an adulteress, if she belong to another man. But if the husband die, she is free from the law so as not to be an adulteress by belonging to another man.” (Ver. 3.) It is difficult to conceive a blow more tremendous to the notion of putting the Christian under Christ and the law as his rule of life. Two husbands are intolerable. Not only is the law not the actual husband, but the apostle will not hear of Christ and the law. It must be Christ alone. To admit of any other association is to be false to Him. If the law had been the old husband, such is no longer the relationship of the Christian. Death having come in, the former obligation terminates, and there is freedom to belong to another without fear of adultery, but to Christ exclusively. Compare for our practice Phil. 3:13, 14.

“So that, my brethren, ye also have been put to death to the law by the body of Christ that ye should belong to another—him that was raised out of [the] dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.” (Ver. 5.) Far from its being the aim of God to maintain the rule of the law, the express design and effect of grace is to bring the Christian (even if a Jew formerly) out of the old relationship into an absolutely new one founded on the death of Christ, that he should henceforth belong exclusively to Him risen from among the dead, and this in order to glorify God by fruits acceptable to Him.

It will be observed, however, that the apostle carefully abstains from the least insinuation that the law is dead. Not so does God deliver. The law lives to curse and kill all within its sphere. But we by death with Christ pass out of its power to touch us; and having a new husband, even Christ risen, we dare not allow any other spiritual rule: else we are guilty of what is most grievous in His eyes and an utter breach of our new relationship. And this alone secures fruitfulness Godward. Subjection to Christ fulfills the law without thinking of any one or thing but Him. You cannot, you ought not to serve two masters.

“For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins that [were] by the law wrought in our members to the bearing fruit to death; but now have we got discharge from the law, having died in what we were held, so as for us to serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.” (Ver. 6.)

Thus evidently the flesh and the law (as we may add the world) are correlative; and the Christian belongs to neither, but to Christ, and to Him risen from the dead. We are no longer in the flesh; we were there, and to this state the law applied: it is made not for the righteous, but the unrighteous. The Christian is dead to law, not it to anybody. Not only does the law work death and condemnation to the unbeliever, but the Christian who meddles with it as a rule for his path will prove it, if taught of God, to be a rule, not of life, but of death. As Christ is our life, so is He our pattern and power through the Holy Ghost, who forms us according to the word which reveals Him to our souls.

It is scarcely needful to point out how false is the doctrine of the common text and translation, which the margin corrects. If true, Antinomianism would follow, than which nothing is more false and evil. Death to law as well as sin is the fruit of Christ's death and resurrection, and the privilege of the Christian. The law lives to condemn every living soul who pretends to a righteousness of his own.

Notes on Romans 7:7-13

The passage on which we now enter has been the occasion of as extraordinary discord in thought and comment as any other in the epistle, and I cannot but think with small fruit as to intelligence of God's mind revealed in it. The source of the difficulty is the ordinary one—ignorance of the Christian's position or standing, and consequently of his relation to the law. Had the six preceding verses of chapter vi. been understood, there would have been no such obscurity and no room for such divergence among those who have discussed it. But death with Christ to sin and law is an unknown region, and the loss to souls from ignorance of it is incalculable The point, which divides the mass of those who have written and preached on it, as well as of multitudes of those influenced by them, is the question whether the experience described is that of a natural man or of a Christian. It is assumed on both sides that one or other it must be. But the assumption is an error, and the failure of both lies exactly here. It is impossible rightly to understand the passage if applied either to a natural man or to a Christian. There may be, there is, a transitional state constantly found in souls when they are born again, but not yet in conscious deliverance; and this is the precise state here in question. Paul may have passed as most do through this experience more or less during the three days, when without sight, he neither ate nor drank. He was converted then, no longer therefore a natural man, but not yet filled with the Holy Ghost. Certainly he personates the case and reasons it out fully from verse 7 to the end of the chapter. It is the case of one quickened, but not yet submitting to the righteousness of God. Hence, being jealous for God but ignorant of the full place in which redemption sets the believer, such a soul places itself under law; and the operation of the law is therefore exhibited to us. There is an awakened conscience, but no power. If the new nature were not there, such experience could not be: if the Holy Ghost were there, power would follow, as we see in chapter viii. where we have the proper normal state of the Christian. The state described, however, is in no case I believe final, but transitional, though bad and legal teaching may keep a soul in it till grace acts fully, it may be, on a deathbed, or what is equivalent.

“What then shall we say; [Is] the law sin? Let it not be. But I should not have known sin unless by law; for lust also I had not known unless the law had said, Thou shalt not lust. But sin, having taken occasion by the commandment, wrought out in me every [manner of] lust; for apart from law sin [is] dead. But I was alive apart from law once; but the commandment having come, sin revived, and I died; and the commandment that [was] unto life was even found for me unto death. For sin, having taken occasion by the commandment, deceived, and by it slew me. So that the law [is] holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good. Did then the good become death to me? Let it not be; but sin, that it might appear sin, working out death to me by the good, that sin might become excessively sinful by the commandment.” (Ver. 7-13.)

Thus the apostle takes pains to relieve the law of all censure. Far from this, it was the excellency of the law which was so fatal to the sinner. It knows no mercy; it cannot mitigate its terms or its punishment. By the law is the full knowledge of sin, said the apostle in chapter iii. So here, whether objectively or in inward consciousness, law is the means of its discovery, not from any defect in

law but from the sinfulness of sin, which is here personified as the foe that is seizing a point for attacking man. But here the apostle is occupied with the proof not of guilty acts but of an alien rebellious nature, and hence singles out the last commandment, the prohibition of covetousness or lust, as the most adapted to convict of sin, not merely of sins. And how true this is! Who does not know the irritation produced by a restraint on the will? So all manner of lust is excited, for apart from law sin is dead: let the commandment have come, and all is over. It never did, it cannot, improve the flesh, but contrariwise provoke it by the curb applied. What is really wanted is a new nature and a transforming object; but law neither communicates the one nor reveals the other: grace does both through Christ our Lord. The fault is solely in the first man, the deliverance is exclusively in the Second. Law sets forth what man ought to be, but condemns him necessarily for the sin it makes active and manifest, without the smallest power to save from it any more than to strengthen against it. On the contrary, says the apostle, “I was alive apart from law once, but, the commandment having come, sin revived and I died.” Thus what pointed to life only proved an instrument of death. But if the living man die, law cannot quicken the dead. It is the Son's to quicken whom He will, even as the Father does. But here again the apostle is careful to lay all blame on sin, which, having taken occasion by the commandment, slew by it the deceived man. Thus the law is vindicated, the nature it in vain appeals to is alone in fault; for the commandment is holy, just, and good. Did then the good become death to me? asks the apostle. Not so; it is sin here again he treats as the true culprit, “sin that it might appear sin, working out death to me by the good, that sin might become excessively sinful by the commandment.” Could the Jew, however prejudiced against grace, however prepossessed in favor of law, complain with justice? Is it not the evident truth?

Chapter 228

Notes on Romans 7:14-20

The apostle turns now to a discussion of the working of the law, and the discovery which the renewed man makes of no good thing in him, that is, in his flesh. It is one set free reflecting on his state when under law. “For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.” (Ver. 14.) Thus it is opened by the technical expression of Christian knowledge, and this inwardly. But the soul is shut up to a sense of its own overwhelming evil. Only observe it is the bitter sense of bondage to sin, and not the love of sin. Still, though it is one born again, there is no strength whatever. “For what I work out I know (or, own) not, for not what I wish I do, but what I hate this I am doing. But if what I do not wish this I am doing, I agree to the law that [it is good; but now [it is no longer I that work it out, but the sin that dwelleth in me.” (Ver. 15-17.) It is no small anguish for the soul to feel, who had thought that to be forgiven was all, and that after this, nothing but light and joy remained. And now to find oneself weighed down by a constant inward dead weight of evil, to prove experimentally that one is a slave to sin, effort only making it manifest, is a distress as grave as it is unexpected. He learns, however, that it is not himself that loves sin, for he really hates it. Sin is there, and it is not himself now, as he learns even in this painful experience. But what a wretched state! what a slave!

It is evident that the state described is not that of deliverance; it is not therefore the normal state of the Christian, but one of transition. The reader will be perhaps as pleased as I with the substance of the following note, which I did not expect from Doddridge. “The apostle here, by a very dexterous turn, changes the person and speaks as of himself. This he elsewhere does (Rom. 3:6; 1 Cor. 10:30; chap. iv. 6) when he is only personating another character. And the character here assumed is that of a man, first ignorant of the law, then under it, and sincerely desiring to please God, but finding to his sorrow the weakness of the motives it suggested, and the sad discouragement under which it left him; and last of all with transport discovering the gospel, and gaining pardon and strength, peace and joy by it. But to suppose he speaks all these things of himself or the confirmed Christian—that he really was when he wrote this epistle—is not only foreign but contrary to the whole scope of his discourse, as well as to what is expressly asserted, chap. 8:2.”

It is a question of power coming in, not of will; for he is supposed to will the contrary, but alas! does what he wills not. Thus the moral character of both natures is made plain. The flesh never goes along with the moral judgment and desire of the renewed man while under law. But it is well to observe that there is another discussion in verses 18-20 leading to the same result and closing similarly, only with greater emphasis personally in its course. “For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, no good dwelleth; for to will is present with me, but to work out the good [is] not; for I am not doing good which I wish; but evil which I wish not, this I do. But if what I wish not, this I am doing, [it is] no longer I that work it out, but the sin that dwelleth in me.” (Ver. 18-20.)

It is a renewed “I,” but obliged to feel that it is powerless. The hated evil continually gains the day, and the good that is acknowledged and valued slips through undone—a dreadful lesson, yet the

truth of our nature, wholesome and needful to learn. Grace turns it to excellent account, and ere long, if there be simplicity and subjection of heart through the Holy Ghost to Christ.

In all the precious process it is striking to see how totally eclipsed is every object and power of faith. It is throughout self, though not self-indulged and gratified, but self-proving to be an intense cause of misery and disappointment. Christ in the end becomes all the more welcome and the deliverance of grace, not activity of self, through Him. After this activity in the energy of the Spirit can safely follow: before it, if possible, it would only veil the knowledge of self from us, and so far hide the truth and foster both self-love and self-righteousness.

It will be observed too, how admirably the apostle, while asserting fully the new place which grace gives by our having part with Christ in His death, guards the law from all impeachment. Let the Jew be ever so sensitive, God's honor is safe; and it was not Paul who forgot or wounded it, whatever the adversaries of the gospel averred. As the law was not sin, so it was not death. The entire fault lay in man's sin, not in God's law. The converted feel this and cleave to the law, let it be ever so peremptory and painful. But it never does nor can deliver; but on the contrary, demonstrates the abject, thorough, hopeless bondage to sin in which our nature is held—the more felt, the more the sanctity of the law is owned. Under law therefore, the renewed soul finds peace impossible. Impossible in this state to do anything but condemn oneself. This is true and good as far as it goes, but it is not the Christian state, though it is the condition in which Christians must find themselves till they know deliverance from their state of sin, and not the forgiveness of their sins alone.

We see progress before full sense of emancipation comes. It is in the second discussion, not the first, that the soul is represented as saying “in me, that is, in my flesh, no good dwelleth.” The distinction of the new nature from the old becomes more apparent, though power is still wanting. The next verses show us how the misery is brought to a crisis, but through grace to a close.

Chapter 229

Notes on Romans 7:21-25

Verses 21-23 furnish the conclusion from the discussion we have seen doubly pursued. “I find then the law for me wishing to do the right thing that evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man, but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that is in my members.” Guilt is not the matter in hand, but power, or rather the total absence of it, so that with the best possible dispositions and desires, all ends in captivity to sin, though it is now hated. It is not the soul in the death and darkness of nature, but renewed. God is loved, evil abhorred; but the soul finds itself powerless either to give effect to the one or to avoid the other. There is progress notwithstanding, sad as the experience still, and slow as the soul itself may be, to realize or allow it. Hence, he now speaks of the opposition he finds in his members, the law of sin that is there. There is a growing sense of distinctness, as well as of internal conflict. This does not give peace any more than power. Far from it. As far as feeling goes, never was he more intensely miserable.

But the deepening of the darkness precedes the light of day. New light dawns when all seemed most forlorn. “Wretched man I! who shall deliver me out of this body of death?” This expression of distress, not without hope, yet bordering on despair, is the direct road to the Deliverer. The mistake was looking to himself, the humiliating process was the discovery of his own powerlessness for good however loved, against his own evil however honestly detested. All turns on the question of a Deliverer outside self. All expectation of victory over self by himself is proved to be the sheerest vanity of vanities. Another becomes the true and sole resource. Who that other is remains not for a moment an object of hesitation to the believer. The inquiry has only to be raised in order to receive the most decided and triumphant answer. “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Jesus is not alone the one ground of pardon through His bloodshedding; He is equally the Deliverer from the withering sense of death which the believer experiences when honestly seeking to subdue his own will and work out the good he delights in and eschew the ill he hates. Broken to nothingness by the continual proof of his own failure, spite of prayer, watching, and efforts of every conceivable kind, he abandons himself as hopelessly wretched, looks out of himself inquiringly, and answers at once the demand of his soul with a song of thanksgiving for Jesus.

The Spirit of God, however, takes care at once to guard the soul, now humble and filled with praise, from the illusion that the flesh is changed for the better. Not so: the two natures retain each its own character. “Therefore then I myself with the mind serve God's law, but with the flesh sin's law.” (Ver. 25.) We shall see more of the deliverance itself, and its consequences, in the following chapter. Meanwhile we learn here that if the flesh acts at all, it can only be to sin. Such is its law. Deliverance does not alter the bent of man's nature, which is the same in all, in the Christian as in the unbeliever.

Notes on Romans 8:1

We have seen in chapter 7, first, the doctrine in the opening verses; then the discussion of the manner in which the law works in the soul that is born again but that does not realize the deliverance with which he began, not only conflict under law but the discovery of the two natures, and besides of one's own powerlessness though renewed—an experience which closes however not in the utter wretchedness which is its immediate result but in looking completely out of self to God's deliverance in and through Christ, though the two natures abide none the less for all that, each with its own unchanged characteristics.

The beginning of chapter 8 is in some respects (as indeed in a larger sense is the entire chapter) a summary and conclusion in relation to the previous reasoning. Still the argument and the revelation of the truth are also pushed on, though there is allusion to the points already cleared in the discussion from chapter 5:12 to the close of chapter 7. Nothing can well be conceived more striking than the grandly explicit, and distinct, and comprehensive affirmation of verse 1. “There is therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus.” It is the broad truth laid down with all clearness for all who are set in this new place of acceptance.— “in Christ Jesus.” For such he could not say more, he would not say less, as to the question before us; and what he says is said absolutely and peremptorily. There is purposely no loophole for modifying or enfeebling the deliverance.

Therefore I cannot at all agree with those who admit that the clause in the received text and ordinary translation is (i.e., thus the latter half in the Authorized Version) immaterial. Believing it to be spurious on the best and ample authority, I am of opinion that it is of great importance to the force of the passage that the gloss added should be rejected. These words are of the greatest value in verse 4; they are an incubus, a dead weight, in verse 1. Here they would necessarily tend to act as a qualifying clause and throw the soul on an examination of walk as the means of certifying that one is in Christ Jesus. Now the duty of self-judgment as to my heart and ways is freely admitted; but it is not the way to ascertain that I am in Christ. If I did gather from my walk and spirit the assurance of such a standing for my soul, it would be in the highest degree self-righteous and presumptuous. The man whose assurance was founded on the good estimate he had formed of his own inward and outward ways would be an object not enviable but of the deepest pity. The true place of self-judgment for the Christian according to scripture is, while holding fast that by grace we are in Christ and hence possessors of the highest privileges, that we should detect our shortcomings and their causes in order to humble ourselves for practical inconsistencies of any kind measured by that exalted standard. If introduced here, it would dislocate all truth, impair all grace, and eventually destroy all the springs of power in walk.

The passage then in its true form denies all condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. It is not sins proved nor sins remitted in God's righteousness through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; nor is it even the love of God shown so much the more because the object of it is a sinner ungodly and without strength. All this is in view of the sinner as such, though supposed to believe in Jesus.

But here the old man is seen to be crucified, and the believer dead with Christ and alive to God in virtue of Him risen from the dead. In a word, they are viewed as being in an altogether new place, in Christ Jesus; where condemnation is not, and cannot be. It is not a question of degree but an absolute fact, true of all real Christians. They are one as much as another in Christ Jesus and outside condemnation. To say that in proportion as he is imbued with the Spirit of Christ he is free from condemnation is to miss the truth here revealed, however momentous it surely is for the Christian to be thus imbued. But here I repeat it is a question of the place grace gives them in Christ and not of their measure of making it good in feeling and ways. “In Christ” rightly understood precludes all question of degree or doubt quoad hoc. Bring in the walk, and therein at once we find abundant grounds, I will not say for doubt (which is always unjustifiable and profitless), but for sorrow and humiliation, and the more so because we are “in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 7

For the better understanding of this chapter, I shall commence a little in advance of it. The apostle, having demonstrated by the power of the Spirit of God the iniquity of man—every man under sin, whether Jew or Gentile, responds to that condition by the propitiation through faith in the Son of God.

But in chapter iv., another principle is developed, namely, the resurrection. In that chapter the faith of Abraham is presented to us as the model before God, who quickens the dead. He considered not his own body now dead. His faith was imputed to him for righteousness, and to us also who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. You see that our justification is here attributed to the resurrection.

In chapter v. this principle is applied to justification, our place before God, and the confidence in His love which it sustains. This principle of resurrection leads the apostle to trace the thing to its source—sin to Adam, righteousness to Christ.

Chapter 6 consequently applies the resurrection to the question of life. We are dead and raised again, not only in order to be justified in Christ, but necessarily to be dead to sin, and to live to God as those who are alive from the dead.

Now chapter 7 applies the effect of the resurrection to the law. It is the forgetfulness of this that has caused the difficulty in the chapter, and which has produced so much discussion.

The law is presented as a first husband, who is dead in the death of Christ, and Christ raised from the dead is now our husband, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Then the apostle demands, “Is the law sin? God forbid.” But it cannot heal sin, but only impute it to death (chap. 4:15; 5:13), to provoke it, that it might become exceeding sinful. The apostle then presents the effects of the law upon the experience of the soul when it is placed before law and feels its effect upon the conscience. But here there is something to add. The soul to be overwhelmed by the view of the law must acknowledge that it is spiritual, and desire to fulfill it: otherwise there is carelessness or else self-righteousness. The apostle therefore assumes the spirituality of the law, or at least presents the experience (it is the only time) of the soul which knows that the law is good, and which takes pleasure in the law of God in the inward man (ver. 22); that is to say, a soul renewed. Renewed in its intelligence and in its will, it understands the law and it takes pleasure in it, but it does not yet understand grace. The consequence is, that the more it understands, the more it takes pleasure in it, the more miserable it is—it finds no strength. (Ver. 18, 19.)

The more he understands the law to be what it should, the more he feels justly condemned, and incapable of fulfilling it, or of delivering himself from his condition; and therefore the apostle in these verses speaks neither of Christ nor the Spirit. A Christian may find himself in this condition, but this condition is not Christian.

Chapter 8 gives the Christian condition. From the one he has come to the other; and the soul finds itself in liberty, blessing, and security.

You will find in chapter 3 these three characters of man unconverted—none righteous, none that understandeth, none that seeketh after God. (Chap. 3:10, 11.) Now in chapter vii. the man has become intelligent; he acknowledges that the law is good, and he submits to it (ver. 12-16); his will is broken, for he takes pleasure in it (ver. 22); but the third thing fails—he has no righteousness. The more his intelligence of the spirituality of the law increases and the more he desires to fulfill it, the more he understands that righteousness is not in him; and he is a miserable man.

For up to the present time, although he might have understood by a spirit and a heart renewed, the spirituality of the law, he does not yet understand by the testimony of the Holy Ghost that the righteousness of God is his by faith in Jesus Christ. He is not yet set at liberty, he is under the law. The Holy Spirit cannot put His seal upon such a condition. He puts His seal upon the righteousness of Christ known in the heart by faith in His testimony; and therefore strength fails here also, although the man. may have all the good dispositions possible.

The object therefore in chapter vii. is not to distinguish between a man regenerate and unregenerate, but to show the condition or position of a man renewed, and that the man raised up with Christ, who has the life of Christ in his soul, is no more under the law, but is subject to another husband, namely, Christ raised in order that he may bring forth fruit unto God; that under the law the heart that is renewed is perfectly miserable, because there is still the law in the members which prevents its fulfillment. (Ver. 23.)

But in Christ this is not our position, according as we find (chap. 4), by the grand principle of resurrection by faith, according to the power of Him who raises the dead, we are justified according to the justification of Christ, because united to Him—identified with the Second Adam, as we were with the first naturally.

The law could only add to the sin of our state by nature the positive transgression of a known commandment. (Ver. 7.)

This resurrection with Christ, by the communication of His life to all of us who are justified, is necessarily a principle of holiness. If we are by our union with Christ placed before God, justified in Christ, we have by that union a life of holiness within us. If we are dead with Him and raised with Him, it is not only that we should be before Him according to the efficacy of His death and resurrection, when it is a question as to the imputation of sin; but that we should walk according to the newness of the life that has been communicated. (Chap 7:4.) But at the same time the law was not able to follow through death and resurrection. Therefore being united to Christ, and dead and raised with Him in His death and resurrection, received by faith, we are raised to life as to a new husband when the first is dead.

For “without the knowledge of that, the law, instead of being able to assist us in the fulfillment of the desires of the heart renewed, renders us perfectly miserable by the feeling of our utter impotency; whilst Christ justified is our life and our strength before God, so that there is no condemnation. The Spirit of life in Him has made me free; and that which the law could not do, God has done by sending His Son to condemn the sin found in us by nature, by making expiation for the sin by that which it is, that is to say, a sacrifice for sin. (Chap. 8:3.)

In chapter 7 it is necessary always to remember that a man acts upon the law when the efficacy of the resurrection of Christ is either unknown or misunderstood; for the Holy Spirit is given as the seal of the work of Christ. I do not say that he acts as the seal (for He must act to produce the first good thoughts), but He is given to dwell in us as the seal of the work of Christ known by faith. Then He produces assurance, faith, strength, good fruits, and the consciousness of our communion with the Father and with the Son; the consciousness of our adoption; sorrow—not of chapter vii., the sorrow of the soul not set free, but the sorrow—of sympathy with all the misery around, and of our own bodies, which belonged to the ruined creation, with which we shall be set free when power is exercised to that end. (Chap. 8:22, 23.)

In the meantime, in waiting, we have the confidence that all things contribute to our good, and that nothing will separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Chapter 232

Scripture Not Methodical

Were subjects treated methodically and separately in scripture, especially in the new testament, they would be much less perfectly understood. It is in life and power, whether that of Christ or that of the Holy Ghost in the inspired writers, that they develop themselves to our hearts.

Scripture Queries and Answers: Acts 8:37

Q. I have seen it stated that “the whole of Acts 8:37, If thou believest with all,' &c., is universally pronounced by Biblists as an interpolation. It exists in only one Greek MS., having no place in the other MSS. It is marked in our Greek Text as spurious, is omitted from some, and never ought to have had a place in our English Bible.” G. T. A.

A. The verse exists in Laud's Uncial MS., now in the Bodleian, in Beda's Greek (unless it be the same copy), in about twenty cursives, as well as some versions. Nor has it wanted defenders, as Wolf abroad and Whitby at home. At the same time it was certainly not read by much the weightier as well as by the most numerous authorities, and is justly rejected by the best critics, and should disappear from all Bibles. It seems to have been read by several early fathers as Irenaeus and Cyprian, if it was not inserted to support the later copies of the Vulgate. Internal evidence is, at least, as decisively against it as external.

Chapter 234

Scripture Queries and Answers: Characteristics of Scripture Readings

3.

Q. What are the distinctive characteristics of a meeting of the assembly as such? Should a scripture-reading be regarded in this light? If held statedly in a private house, would 1 Cor. 14:34, 35 or 1 Tim. 2:11, render a question from a female invalid? Where does 1 Cor. 11:5, 13 apply?

EDIN.

A. When Christians come together ■ν ■κκλησι■ (i.e., as an assembly), there is an entire openness for such action as the Spirit may direct in prayer and singing, blessing and thanksgiving, reading, speaking (subject of course to the regulations of the Lord in 1 Cor. 14). This is not at all the character of a scripture-reading, whether stated or occasional, at a public meeting-room or in a private house. One point of value in it is to afford an opportunity for questions and explanations which would be out of place in the assembly. The nature of a meeting depends not on the fact of who are present, but on its aim and character. Thus, a lecture or a preaching of the gospel, like a reading-meeting, might have all the saints of a place present; but its own character is quite unaffected by such a circumstance. Nevertheless, a social character is, I think, desirable for a scripture-reading, so as to make it expedient, as well as lawful, for a woman to ask a question, if she wished. There are cases as when many men are present, where nature itself would teach her to prefer silence. 1 Timothy forbids not this, but teaching and the exercise of authority. Prophesying (according to 1 Cor. 11 compared with 1 Cor. 14) was lawful for women, not in the assemblies but at home; where, as I suppose, Philip's four daughters exercised their gift unobtrusively and with decorum. So too Priscilla, with her husband, helped Apollos in private.

Chapter 235

Scripture Queries and Answers: Dative and Accusative Time

Q. What is the difference in the use of the dative and accusative of time, as in Acts 13:20, &c.? B.

A. When the dative is used for time, it is always viewed as one whole point or object; when the accusative, it is a space during which. Thus, taking the common reading, judges characterized the period of 450 years, as we hear of them during forty years in the desert. (Ver. 18.) So ■καν■ χρν■■ in Acts 8:11, and Rom. 16:25. Thus τρ■τ■ ■μ■ρ■ and τρ■την ■μ■ραν would not have the same force, though in result the sense would be the same. In the first phrase I should think of that one day so characterized. With τρ■τν ■μ. I think of two days elapsed before. In a word the accusative is duration, as the dative is epoch, though in sense running often into one another. Thus, according to the common reading of the dative, in Acts 13:20, the statement would not be during 450 years, but up to, as far as (i.e., counting from the end of the desert). Thus Joshua, elders, and Cushanrishathaim would have to be deducted—say some forty-five years. And the chronology is in no way changed. But then the reading of the more ancient authorities gives a very different sense.

Chapter 236

Scripture Queries and Answers: Ephesians 5:26

Q. Eph. 5:26, Is it true that the laver, and not “the washing,” of the water is here intended? Is it correct to say that we must not join ■ν ■■ματι (“in the word") with τ■ λουτρ■ nor with το■ ■δατος, because the former would require τ■ ■ν ■■ματι, and the latter το■ ■ν ■■ματι? that therefore the connection is with ■γ. or rather with καθαρ■σας?

- A.

A. The great general lexicographers, from H. Stephens to Liddell and Scott, give not only “laver” but “hath,” and hence washing and even water for bathing or washing.” See the amplest proof in classic Greek given by Passow, Rost, Palm, &c. So Schleusner, Wahl, and Rose's “Parkhurst,” among those devoted to the Greek New Testament, Indeed the LXX use in general a different word (λουτ■ρ) for a laver,,and λουτρ■ν for washing, as in Song of Sol. 4:2; 6:6. So thy Apocryphal Sir. or Ecclesiastic. xxxi. 30. (Ed. Tisch., 1850, Vo u, 195.) Further, λουτρ■ν was used for the hath as a word for washing, λο■τρον or λο■τριον for the water rendered impure by bathing. See Scapula, Hederic, &c. Hence the English version is thoroughly justified, instead of its being “a meaning the word never has.” It is generally, says Pape, cleansing, washing away of filth, abwaschen, absp■len. It may take, as a secondary meaning, the hath itself, as the word “hath” does in English. But it means applying the water, not the vessel. It is used often by the fathers for baptism, but even there in the same sense (■ς ■κπλυσ■ν, says Gregory Nazianzen). Indeed so far from being or alluding to a vessel, it is not likely a vessel was ever used in scriptural times. At any rate, Dean Alford's statement is quite unfounded, Titus 3 refers to baptism, but to washing, not to a font. He says, See Lexx.; but the Lexx. give hath, water for washing or bathing, the act of washing, and even drink-offerings. It is not the hath properly as a place, but the bathing; and hence we have λουτρ■ θερμ■ and φυχρ■, λουτρ■ ■κεανο■ο, and λοθτρ■ φαινομ■να ■π■ τ■ς γ■ς, κ.τ.λ. So the λουτροφ■ρος used to bring the water, not the hath as a vessel.

Next, while it may be right to connect ■ν ■. with the verb or the participle we must necessarily connect τ■ λ. το■ ■δατος too, and ■ν ■. becomes characteristic of the cleansing by the washing of the water. Thus this is the instrument of cleansing, and its true character is ■■μα. Neither of the constructions said to be required in this case is called for in the least degree. T■ ■ν ■. would be utterly out of place; το■ ■ν ■. would be nonsense; but ■ν ■. as it stands by itself is just what is wanted as a characteristic explanation (like ■ν πνε■ματι, chap. 2:22, and many such cases). But τ■ ■ν ■ (if it be Greek, which is doubtful) would point to a specific agent that would make the hath. If the meaning were “purified by the hath of water by the word,” the Greek would be δι■ το■ ■. or τ■ ■. But ■ν ■ is unequivocally the character of the thing spoken of as a whole. T■ λ. is the dative of the instrument; by the washing of the water they were purified: what was its character? It was ■■μα, or rather ■ν ■.

Again, this use of ■ν is quite common on all subjects. (Matt. 12:28; Luke 1:41. 77.) It characterizes. The reasoning on Eph. 5:26 would connect the last case with δο■νια, and turn the passage into folly. See Luke 4:32; 8:43; 21:23. It is simply to characterize the state. The article is

no way needed, but rather its absence. So Roman viii. 3; xiii. 8; 1 Cor. 15:43. In fact it would be endless to cite cases of the sort. It is the regular characteristic style. Prepositions are Middleton's weak point. He followed Hellenism ably, but not the mental bearing of words. Nouns answer to “what?” as 6 answers to “who” (or “which")? The article is indicative of an individual or individuals. Hence, prepositions or not, it makes no difference really. The absence of the article marks the nature or character of a thing; as here ■ν ■■ματι characterizes.

Compare John 15:3 for the doctrine. Both Ellicott and Alford are wrong in regarding sanctification as exclusively a progressive thing after initiation. It is so used, but even more frequently for the first setting apart to God. Here it appears to be used for the thing itself, and not distinctively either first or progressive. The apostle may allude to baptism (or, as is alleged, though very doubtful, to a spousal hath). But he takes care to show that it is the word that purifies, καθαρ■σας ■ν τ■ λουτρ■ το■ ■δατος ■ν ■■ματι being one sentence, which explains how the sanctification is effected. Christ, having loved the Church and given Himself for it, made it His, and does the other two things: He sanctifies it, and then presents it to Himself, being God as well as Second man. Its sanctification is by the purifying power of the word applied by the Holy Ghost.

Hence the 'washing of water by [the] word' is right; and ■ν ■. characterizes the whole statement, being no more connected with καθαρ■σας or ■γ. than with τ■ λ. or το■ ■δατος. It would not be ■ν ■. if it were specifically connected with either.

Chapter 237

Scripture Queries and Answers: Fine Linen in Revelation 19

Q. Rev. 19:8 — What is the meaning of the inspired explanation of the symbolical “fine linen?" B.

A. Observe, first, that it is said to be the righteousness “of saints,” not of God, but of His people. Secondly, it is not exactly their righteousness, but their “righteousnesses” (δικι■ματα). This it is impossible in any just sense to understand of the righteous standing which is made ours in Christ. God's righteousness in Him is the same for all saints. But each saint here will have his or her own righteousness. Hence it is no question of taking up the saints to heaven, which will be the crowning act of grace, nor of our presentation in the Father's house in a war suitable to His grace. We must therefore distinguish between the white raiment of Rev. 4 and the fine linen of Rev. 19. The one was the clothing of pure grace, the fruit of divine righteousness in Christ. But in chapter 19 it was given to the bride to be arrayed in “fine linen” which is expressly said to be the saints' righteousness. It is in view of our appearing with Christ before the world, and consequently when all the righteous results of the ways of the saints shall be manifested.

Chapter 238

Scripture Queries and Answers: Force of Christ Dying for All

Q. 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. - What is the force of Christ dying for all? and in what sense are all dead as proved by His death?

- P.

A. The meaning is that, if Christ died for all, it was because all had died: otherwise there would have been no such need for Him to die. You need not go down into a pit where one will perish, if he is not there perishing.

That it is not all died to sin is evident from the correspondency of “all” in the sentence; and further that “they which live” are taken as sonic out of the “all” in what follows. “He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live,” &c. ο■ ξ■ντες, not ξ■ντες. Hence he does not know even Christ after the flesh, as a living Jewish Messiah, whom as a Jew he would have known: “God was in Christ reconciling the world.” Nor does he know Christians as belonging to the old creation to which they had died, nor others, for they were all dead—their whole history. But if a man was in Christ, it was a new creation. He belonged to that in which all things were of God. The whole subject is the power of life in Christ as triumphant over death. Hence, when he applies it, he does not say merely “who died for them,” as when he speaks of all, but “rose again” also. It is the power and fullness of a new thing for those taken out of death through Christ's going down into it. There was neither Jew, Gentile, sin, flesh, nor any other thing of the old Adam or legal estate, but a new creation.

Chapter 239

Scripture Queries and Answers: God's Answering Prayer and General Laws

Q. How Do You Reconcile God's Answering Prayer With General Laws?

- Discipulus

A. I do not see any difficulty in God's answering prayer connected with general laws, if we allow God to be free to act in His own world—as free as I am. Do I change general physical laws when I go, on request, to visit some sick person? My will—how, I know not—acts on and by these physical laws. Gravity is in my foot or in the earth, force is in my muscle, electricity in the nerves which set it in motion; yet I in my poor way have answered a request. Now I recognize fully power in God because He can, I need not say, not only change His law, but, without doing so, give force to agents in them, produce gastric juice more powerfully, or more electricity in the system at His will without introducing a single new element or law which governs it. Laws remain the same: His will interferes to produce agency by them. He may work a miracle, as raising the dead, which is by no law—He has done so. But I do not speak of miracles which take place when He changes a law, as when He makes the hatchet swim, but when He works by law to particular effects of His will. This may be miraculous, as when a strong whirlwind acted on the sea, and another took away locusts or brought quails. But He may give special activity or quantity to agents which act by laws regularly. I am sure, at any rate, that He hears and answers prayer. The very action of mind on man's frame that more results may be produced, and God's on mind (as to external circumstances), is so wonderful that I see no difficulty at all. Laws which bind nature I admit; laws which bind God I do not.

Chapter 240

Scripture Queries and Answers: Greek and Hebrew Questions

Q. 1. What authorities have ■ξοδον and δ■ξαν in Luke 9:31 respectively? Which is to be preferred?

2. Which is more exact, in Heb. 1:8, “Therefore God, [even] thy God,” &e.; or, “Therefore, O God, thy God,” &c.? And why? C.

A. 1. Only a few cursive manuscripts give δ■ξαν, evidently through δ■ξαν just before and δ■ξαν shortly after. Lachmann and Tischendorf do not so much as notice it as a various reading; but Griesbach and Scholz enumerate the juniors that so read, though of course following ■ξοδον. with all the best and most ancient authorities. Matthaei conjectures that this other may have crept in from Chrysostom.

2. As far as grammar is concerned, I think there need be no question that both the Hebrew and the Greek are capable of either construction. Compare Psa. 50:7; 67:7 for the nominative; and Psa. 43:4 for the vocative, as noticed by another. In verse 8, ■ Θε■ς is unquestionably used in a vocative sense; but this is no way necessary here. The context must decide; and to my mind the anointing would not be congruous with the vocative force in verse 9, so that I incline to the Authorized Version.

Chapter 241

Scripture Queries and Answers: Greek in John 6:57

Q. John 6:57. Why is it δι■ τ■ν πατ■ρα, and not δι■ το■ π, as the Authorized Version might imply? And why not χ■ριν?

Δ

A. We live δι■ τ■ν Χρ■στον, not merely δι■ του Χ., if it was merely a means of living, but on account of Christ, because of Him, and hence according to what His life is derived from, as He lived δι■ τ■ν π. It is not χ■ριν, but the continuous cause, only objectively so, for we eat this blessed food. The force seems to be the moral source of the character of what is produced; thus in Gal. 4:13, δι' ■σθενε■αν, in infirmity. Infirmity of the flesh was the moral source of the character of his preaching; as in Phil. 1:15, envy was the moral source of the character of the preaching for some, as goodwill was for others. So here the Father was the moral source of the character of Christ's life in the world, as Christ is of ours.

Chapter 242

Scripture Queries and Answers: Greek Sequence Term in Luke

Q. Does the term καθεξ■ς in Luke 1 imply historic sequence as is the groundwork of several harmonies of the Gospels?

T.

A. The term is used only but frequently by Luke. It signifies properly, in a regular series, one after another, and hence sometimes simply following, or next, in order. Liddell and Scott say that the more usual word is ■φεξ■ς; and on this word they remark that it is less usually employed of time than of regular order of arrangement. On the whole, I see no sign whatever that Luke uses it for chronological order; nor has the word in itself this meaning, save as chronological order is one sort of order. The passages in Luke, beside the one in question are chapter viii. 1; Acts 3:24; 11:4; 18:23. He too alone uses ■ξ■ς, chapter 7:11 9:37; Acts 21:1; 25:17; 28:18.

Chapter 243

Scripture Queries and Answers: Greek Translated “Save”

Q. When ■λλ■ is used substantially as ε■ μ■, are they precisely the same, as after the transfiguration scene, &c.? Compare Matt. 17:8 with Mark 9:8. 0. P.

A. I do not think them the same. For ε■ μ■ supposes already that there is that one of the kind to which the negative generally applies; it is an exception. But ■λλ■ retains its adversative force as to the whole, but something modifies it in result. Thus in Matt. 11:27 there is one who knows—no one else except—in chapter xii. 4 it was lawful to none else except. In Matt. 17:8 they saw no one, ο■δ■ωα ε■δον ε■ μ■ τ■ω ■. In Mark 9:8, “and suddenly looking round,” ο■κ■τι ο■δ■να ε■δον, ■λλ■ τ■ν■ Here the scene had disappeared, but they saw Jesus alone with themselves. So in Matt. 20:23, Mark 10:40, ο■κ ■στιν ■μ■ν δο■ναι, that is all denied—only modified by ■λλ■ ο■ς ■το■μαστ αι. He does not give places at all as His will, or His patronage, but to those for whom, &c. In Mark and Luke, if not Matthew, we have ο■δε■ς ■γαθ■ς ε■ μ■ ε■ς, ■ Θε■ς. Naturally, good ones were before His mind: He excludes all but God.

Chapter 244

Scripture Queries and Answers: Homage and Worship

Q. In the Bible Treasury for December there is an article on Προσκυν■ω. Would the writer be so good as to say what he means by doing homage or doing obeisance to Jesus Christ, and what her means by worshipping the Father?

- A CONSTANT READER.

A. A well-known version of the New Testament, which has had the respectful commendation of the best Biblical scholars in the Anglican body as well as outside it, was attacked by one not only incompetent but disposed to impute the worst motives for that which was beyond his own measure. The writer of the reply had not the least notion of its source, though he has since heard the name with regret. The aim was to show that the translator insinuated the inferiority of the Son to the Father by restricting “worship” to the latter and translating the same word by “homage” where the Son was concerned. It was shown that this was doubly false; and that the version assailed does speak of “worship” where the Son is spoken of, and gives “homage” where the obeisance is unquestionably rendered to God the Father or to God as such. It is admitted by all persons of real intelligence that the word “worship” has become narrowed in modern English, and that when the language was in an earlier stage it, embraced all acts of obeisance, such as prostration, which were paid to kings or other superiors, as well as what was paid to a divine Being (or one regarded as divine). So it was in Greek; so it stands in the Authorized Version, because at that time the English word “worship” had a generic force as well as that special reference. But this is not so in present usage; and therefore a modern translator must exercise his judgment. Whether Mr. D. has in every instance succeeded in determining the different senses is more than I would say; but his principle is sound and certain. It is ignorance to suppose that, when Jews came to Jesus to heal their diseases, they meant by their homage to convey their conviction that He was God. That He was God and therefore worthy of honor as the Father is what every Christian rejoices to know, and to pay it; but the true meaning of πρ. in these cases throughout the gospels is another matter. In John 4 “worship” is clearly required. On the other hand, “doing homage” may be and is rightly used where God or the Father is in question.

Chapter 245

Scripture Queries and Answers: Matthew 11:12 and Luke 16:16

Q. What is the bearing of Matt. 11:12, and Luke 16:16?

A. It is important to pay attention to the place where these passages are found in the gospels. In Matthew, chapter 11 marks the transition from the presentation of Christ to the nation, the Gentiles being excluded. What is found in chapter 10 speaks of this presentation until the return of the Son of man, and the new order of things which took place in consequence of the rejection of Christ. Verses 20-30 of chapter 11 present this change in the most striking manner. The Savior upbraids the cities where He had labored for their deplorable unbelief, and submits to the will of God in this dispensation. This submission opens for His heart the enigma of that grace which appears in all its simplicity, and in all its power.

It is a question of knowing the Father, and the Son alone can reveal Him; but He invites “all that labor and are heavy laden” to come to Him, and He will give them rest. His person, and not Israel, is the center of grace and of the work of grace. He alone reveals the Father. The judgment of Israel is developed in chapter 12, and the mysteries of the kingdom are brought out in chapter 13. On the occasion of this transition we see the testimony of John and that of Christ equally rejected.

This transition is, if possible, still more clearly marked in Luke at the end of chapter 13. The rupture between Jehovah and Jerusalem is complete: the house which belonged to the children of Jerusalem, once the “house of God,” is abandoned, and they will not see the Lord until Psa. 118 is accomplished in their repentance. Then in chapter 14, the change in the ways of God is clearly shown, and the sphere of the activity of His grace is no longer the now-rejected Israel, but the whole world, after having gathered in the poor of the flock of His people. (Ver. 16-24.) Then the ways of God in sovereign grace towards men—towards sinners—are brought out in that treasury of grace and love, which is found in chapter 15.; and in chapter 16., the Lord shows the use that man ought to make of that which he possesses according to nature, being now that which had been particularly proved in Israel—a steward who was dismissed. He should make use of it in grace, in view of the future; instead of enjoying it as a thing possessed in this world. He should think of eternal habitations. It is here that the passage relative to the kingdom and to John the Baptist is found. His mission was the pivot of the change. In this point of view the mission of Christ on the earth—His ministry—was but the complement of that of John the Baptist. Compare Matt. 4:17; 3:2. Only the latter sung the doleful dirge of judgment, and the former the joyful song of hope and of grace, just as our chapter explains it to us.

In the passages which occupy us, Matthew speaks as thinking of Israel; Luke, as thinking of all men.

Two great systems of God with respect to the earth are found included in His counsels, and revealed in the word. One depended on the faithfulness of man to the responsibility which weighed upon him, the other on the active power of God.

These are the dispensations of the law and of the kingdom. But there was a moment of transition, when the kingdom was preached, and preached in the midst of Israel by John the Baptist and by Christ, without its having been established in power. The people were put to a moral test as to their use of the right of entering in. For the rest, the Prophets and the Psalms had indeed announced beforehand the character of those who were to have a part in the blessings of the kingdom. See Psa. 15; 24; 37, and many others; Isa. 48:22; 51; 57:21; 66:2, and a multitude of other passages. The sermon on the mount has put a seal to this testimony by giving it actuality. Now the preaching of the kingdom had for its effect to separate the remnant (namely, those who had ears to hear) from the evil and hypocrisy which reigned in the midst of the people, to prepare them for the entrance of the kingdom, if it had been established in power; and in fact, Christ being rejected, that they might become the nucleus of the assembly which, according to the counsels of God, was about to be revealed. Then the kingdom took the character of sowing and other similar forms, and not that of the kingdom of a king in power, and it continued to be preached as about to come, although the salvation and the glory of the Church were to occupy, from the coming down of the Holy Spirit, the principal place in the doctrine of which the Spirit is the source.

It was therefore at the moment when the relationships of Israel with God by means of the Messiah had become impossible, and when the relationships founded on the law, and maintained by the testimony of the prophets, were drawing to an end, through the publication of the kingdom ready to be established and in a certain sense, present in the person of the King—it was at that moment that the Lord pronounced these words, which we are seeking to render clear to our readers by answering the question which has been here put.

Now, the first thing that these words state is, that “the law and the prophets were until John.” Israel was placed by God on that footing until John's ministry. They had but to observe the law, and to rejoice in the hope given by the prophets, and all was well. This was no longer the case after John. The kingdom was not established; if it had been, the power of God would have settled everything. Order and peace would have reigned; the remnant would have been blessed in the kingdom where the King would have reigned in righteousness. But it was not so; it was preached, and preached by prophets—and by those who were more than prophets—but by prophets who were reviled and rejected, and for whom the wilderness and death were an abode or a reward. The hypocritical nation, a generation of vipers, would have nothing of it. It was only the energy of faith, going through sufferings, which could seize on it. Satan and the heads of the nation would do all they could to prevent people from entering, and even soil their hands with the blood of the righteous. Those who preached the kingdom suffered, and those who entered it were to have their portion with them. The kingdom was not being established in power; the King did not reign; He was preached. It was only by violence that one forced one's way into it. It was the violent ones, those who were not stopped by obstacles and opposition, but who opened to themselves a way through all, these alone it was who were securing a place for themselves. There is only this difference between Matthew and Luke, that Matthew speaks exclusively of the character of those who seize on the kingdom, and the position of the latter, and does not therefore go beyond the application of these thoughts to the Jewish people. Luke had formally spoken of the highways and hedges, and had by his expressions opened the door to the Gentiles without formally pointing to them as the “whomsoever,” so often quoted by Paul. “Every one,” he says, “forces his way into it.” Since it was a matter of preaching and of faith, the Gentile who would listen to the preaching and

have that faith would enter in, like any other.

Nevertheless, He only opens the door by a principle, according to the doctrine of that gospel from chapter 4. The parable which follows these verses in Luke goes farther. It decidedly opens heaven, and completely overturns the Jewish system, which made earthly blessings to be a proof of God's favor.

Chapter 246

Scripture Queries and Answers: Matthew 13 and 2 Thessalonians 2

Q. How may Matt. 13. be reconciled with 2 Thess. 2, upon the following points? In the prophetic teaching of the Lord Jesus, when on earth, in Matt. 13, there is no present hope, but a prolonged exhortation, at the end of the age, when the wheat is gathered into the garner; whereas, in the teaching of the Holy Ghost from the ascended Lord, the Church is besought “by the coming of the Lord and our gathering together unto him,” as a present hope. Were the Thessalonians “wheat” —or rather are Christians, as such, in Matt. 13 as well as in the epistles? If so, how can the same persons have a present hope, and a protracted one? B.

A. I am not aware of anything that justifies the contrast thus drawn between the parable of the wheat and tare-field, and the instruction in 2 Thess. 2 and elsewhere. The angelic intervention under the authority of the Lord is to gather together first the tares and bind them in bundles with a view to their yet future destruction, before the wheat is gathered into His barn. But why should this be styled a prolonged expectation? Why should it interfere with the constant hope of the coming of the Lord to receive us to Himself? This parable, like all others, is constructed, as it appears to me, expressly to keep up the habitual looking for the closing scene. One could not collect from it anything to forbid that first generation of disciples expecting to be called away to their heavenly mansions. Of course, the same thing applies to all that followed. Thus I see no reason to doubt that the wheat includes the Thessalonian believers with all other Christians. “In the time of harvest” is not a single point of time with previous events protracting the hope, but the general season of gathering in the saints, executing judgment on the tares already disposed by the angels with a view to it, and then the appearing of the saints in glory, which closes this age and introduces the new one.

Scripture Queries and Answers: Matthew 24:29

Q. Matt. 24:29. — Is there any ground to identify the shaking of “the powers of the heavens” (or, as in Mark 13, “the powers that are in the heavens") with the fall of the dragon and his hosts from heaven in Rev. 12? The time does not at all agree. If not, what is meant? C. L.

A. The difficulty suggested as to the date can have no place whatever. Other questions may arise as to the force of words.

In Rev. 12 Satan is cast down, clearly before the last great tribulation, greatly enraged, because he knows he has but a short time, and persecutes the woman for the time, times, and half a time. In the passage in the gospels, where the mark of time seems precise (Matt. 24, Mark 13), the shaking of the powers of the heavens is after the tribulation. That is, the casting down of Satan in Rev. 12 is before, and introductory of, the last tribulation; in Matt. 24 and Mark 13 the shaking of the powers of the heavens is after the tribulation.

Thus, as events, they have nothing to do with one another. In Luke 21 the expression is vague and gives a general ground for what happens.

The inquiry then is simply, without any reference to the fall of Satan from heaven, what these terms mean.

It seems to me that in Luke there is mixed metaphor; in Matthew and Mark it is more in the style of Old Testament prophecy. I have little doubt that the scene will be as mixed as the metaphor—terrible signs actually given (compare Luke 21:11); and, besides that, an actual disruption of all existing powers, and terror on every heart, with the tumultuous swellings of peoples. Compare Psa. 93 where I do not believe it is mere literal waters. Further, I find in Dan. 8:10 the host and the stars clearly refer to rulers (Jewish priestly rulers) on the earth. Now I do not doubt the shakings and subversion of the future (before the great and terrible day of the Lord) will he much greater and more terrible than what is in Dan. 8; but this gives an inlet into what those expressions mean. I would not confine this tremendous breaking up of existing powers and rule to Jewish ones there, though it is in Dan. 8, because Gentiles and Jews are all mixed up together, the sacrifice taken away, and idolatry come in. But there will be more than a revolution—a subversion and upsetting of all manifested and organic powers. There is an analogous upsetting of all powers in Rev. 11, supposed by the inhabitants of the earth to be the great day of the Lamb's wrath, which it is not, but only a precursor of it. I refer to it to show that such subversions of all constituted powers are so spoken of, without any raising of the question whether Satan is cast down from heaven or not. This is before the trumpets and the vials; the end of the last tribulation comes after it—somewhere at the end of the second woe-trumpet, and then God's judgment by Christ Himself. The beast and the final tribulation are a special subject, besides the general government under which these shakings come; and they are so given in the Apocalypse. The general government of God applies to the nations at large; the beast is in connection with the rejection of Christ and enmity to Him. They go on concurrently, but the latter is a special matter.

Chapter 248

Scripture Queries and Answers: Offering of the Firstfruits

Q. Lev. 2:12-16. Why were the first-fruits to be offered and not burnt? What was intended by the corn out of full ears? — J.D.

A. The first-fruits were to be offered but not burnt, because leaven was in them; and they could not be in themselves a sweet savor: hence a sin-offering was offered with them. (Lev. 23:17-19.) They represent the Church, being (as may be seen in Lev. 23) the offering of the day of Pentecost; not the Church in the unity of the body, but as formed among Jews on earth on that day. The first of the first-fruits, the corn out of full ears, is Christ risen, offered on the morrow of the sabbath after the Passover; it represents Christ Himself, and hence (Lev. 23) there was no sin-offering. If we look at it in Lev. 2 it is still Christ. Oil and frankincense are put on it. It is an offering made by fire without leaven. It is Christ looked at as man, tried by divine trial of judgment, but perfect to be offered to God. The expressions are somewhat remarkable—geresh, carmel, “corn mature out of full ears;” it may be, produce of the fruitful field, the latter being the known sense of carmel; the meaning of geresh, was certain. But the general meaning of the offering is pretty plain—Christ in His manhood, sinless and fully proved, presented to God with oil and frankincense of acceptable odor, the first-fruits—fruits of man to God.

Chapter 249

Scripture Queries and Answers: Parable of the Virgins to Jewish Remnant or to Christendom?

Q. Matt. 7:22, 23; Luke 13:25-28. Do these texts warrant the inference that the parable of the virgins (Matt. 25) refers to the Jewish remnant, rather than to Christendom?

J. D. B.

A. It is a mistake in interpreting scripture to conceive that similarity in one point or more establishes identity, many of which however striking would be of no weight against a single irreconcilable difference. The context (and not verbal analogies even if far stronger than in these instances) is alone decisive. It is worth remarking, just to show how precarious this ground is, that a well-known living commentator and critic contrasts Matt. 7:23 with chapter xxv. 12. The truth is, that in the day of the Lord all will be judged who have not been saved, and on similar though not identical grounds; for the Lord will deal with Jew, Gentile, or Christian profession on their own footing, but in His light. The passage in Luke is proved by the context to be the judgment of the Jews who refused the urgent proffers of Jesus. The passage in Matt. 7 need not be so restrained, though no doubt applying there and then. But the parable of the virgins, both contextually and in its own statements, applies not to the Jews (who have already been fully treated of in the preceding two chapters, nationally and as a remnant), but to professing Christendom consisting of disciples real and unreal. The Jewish remnant will be rather the earthly bride than virgins going out to meet the Bridegroom; neither will they from the first possess the gift of the Spirit (the “oil in their vessels") like the wise virgins; nor will any of them be “foolish” like these, but “the wise;” nor will they go to sleep during their awful hour of trial.

Chapter 250

Scripture Queries and Answers: Prophecy

Q. 1. Do the events occurring under the seals, trumpets, and vials, from Rev. 6 to xix., occupy the whole of Daniel's seventieth week (Dan. 9:27), or the latter half only?

2. Are the two periods of 42 months and 1260 days in Rev. 11:2, 3 to be considered as extending over the whole of the above week, or only half of it? If the latter view be taken, how can the three and-a-half days of verse 9, beyond the 1260 days be accounted for?

3. Is it correct to say that the trumpets extend over the first half of the week, the vials over the second half, and the seals over the whole week?

4. Are these events to be considered as wholly prophetical; or do they admit of historical application as well?

- J. T.

A. J. T. is referred to the BIBLE TREASURY (first edition), Vol. 1, pp. 276, 277, and Vol. 2, p. 63 for answers to queries 1 and 2. As to his third question, I think it certain that the seals precede the trumpets, which go down to the introduction of the kingdom in a general way, as the vials go over the latter part of the ground specifically. But the seals do not comprehend the whole week, nor do they go down to the end. I am not disposed to doubt the intention of a general historical application, besides the fulfillment in the great future crisis.

Chapter 251

Scripture Queries and Answers: Questions About “Washed,” “Cleansed,” and “Sanctified”

Q. John 3, 1 Cor. 6, Eph. 5, and Titus 3—What is the meaning of “washing” or “washed” in some of these scriptures? Is the new birth the same as regeneration? If not, wherein do they differ? and how is “cleansed” or “washed” to be distinguished from being “sanctified?” T.

A. Washing naturally applies to some one or thing that is to be cleansed. Our state may show that nothing but death to sin can cleanse us from sin; but the water points to cleansing. So it is said in John 15, already “ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”

“Regeneration” means passing from one state, that of ruin, into another and new state of things, and is used only in Matt. 19, besides Titus 3 “Born again,” “born of water and the Spirit,” is the actual communication of divine life. One is thus born of God. This is life. Regeneration supposes death, and is so de facto, though this can only be by life in Christ. But it supposes, when fully brought to light, an entrance into a new state, of which resurrection is the expression—life out of death, and hence leaves sin and an evil nature behind. Of this baptism is the sign. So we are baptized unto Christ's death, that we should walk in newness of life. Nor is it merely that we have got life from or through Christ, but are quickened together with Him. This of course implies death—the putting away, but judgment, of the old man.

“Sanctified,” though it includes this, yet contains somewhat more. We are sanctified to, and not merely washed from. No doubt by this last we are cleansed; but an object is given to which I am attached by grace and so sanctified. A creature practically and morally is what his object is. “That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” is not quite correct. It is ■γι■ση καθαρ■σας—that Christ might sanctify the church, having purified or cleansed it, &c. They go together; but the cleansing, though a positive thing from evil, is connected with the sanctifying or consecrating the affections to God. In sanctification there are holy affections; and these clearly exclude evil ones. But there are these two things, though they cannot be separated.

The word is in every respect the instrument. The washing of regeneration is typified by the flood as Peter shows. The old world was then cleared away, and a new one begun. So it is for the baptized.

Chapter 252

Scripture Queries and Answers: Revelation 1:20 and 14:13

Q. 1. What do the “stars” of the seven churches represent? (Rev. 1:20.)

2. Who are they who rest from their labors and their works do follow them? (Rev. 14:13.)

W. de R. B.

A. 1. The “stars” of Rev. 1; 2 & 3 are symbols of those who rule in the assemblies subordinately to Christ. They are called “angels,” because they represent, in the way of moral responsibility, the sphere in which they are called to act for Christ, and are thus identified, each, with the state of the assembly in which he may be thus set.

2. Rev. 14:13 announces the blessedness henceforth of those that die in the Lord. There is no more dying thus. The end of such suffering as well as of the testimony that exposed to it is come. Hence we have the Lord's coming in judgment immediately consequent. The special reference is to the Apocalyptic martyrs for His name.

Scripture Queries and Answers: Romans 8:10

Q. Rom. 8:10. Can this mean that the body indeed is dead (i. e., by the sentence on the first Adam), but the spirit is life because of righteousness (i.e., righteousness would also be the cause)? The force would be, that though the body be or remain dead thus, the spirit, &c. The expression, “if Christ be in you” would require as much, because in this sense He does not cause the body to be dead. And the following verse would mean that this very dead body will be raised.

- Querist.

A. “Mortal” hardly chimes in with this. The other sense makes “the body is dead” depend directly on what precedes. If Christ be in you, the body is dead (i.e. reckoned dead according to chap. vi.) because of sin being its character if alive in flesh, and the spirit life because righteousness is the will of God and in us the fruit of the Spirit. I hardly think the first view can be maintained, however generally true in itself.

Chapter 254

Scripture Queries and Answers: Sleep in Jesus, Dead in Christ

Q. 1 Thess. 4:14, 16. — What is the force of the expressions, and what the distinction, of “sleep in Jesus,” and “dead in Christ;” especially with reference to the connection of “Jesus” with “sleep,” and of “Christ” with “dead?” W.

A. It is to be borne in mind that Jesus is the personal name of our Lord. It is never used as the expression of a condition, like Christ. The appearance of this in verse 14 is not justified by an appeal to the language of the Holy Ghost. The real force is “those put to sleep” (or “that have slept") “by Jesus.” Such is His dealing in their case. The death of His own is sleeping by His hand, not as the wages of sin, or Satan's power. It is by that very person who Himself died and rose. Whereas “dead in Christ” is a condition. The saints are dead, not merely like natural men, but dead in Christ. “In Jesus” could not, I think, be thus used. Eph. 4:21 is no exception; for it means “in the person of Jesus,” and not a condition. Hence it is unscriptural to say “yours in Jesus,” or “chosen in Jesus;” it should be “in Christ,” in Christ Jesus,” “in the Lord,” &c.

Chapter 255

Scripture Queries and Answers: the Body of Christ a Heavenly Designation?

4. Q. Is “the body of Christ” a heavenly designation? S.

A. It is “heavenly” as descriptive of union with our glorified head, but not in the sense of applying to the members of Christ when viewed as actually in heaven. It is a heavenly relationship, but is always, I think, used in Scripture of Christians still on earth. The reason, I suppose is, that the body is where the Holy Ghost is who baptizes those who compose it into one. Departed Christians, therefore, though of course members of that body, are not contemplated, because their spirits are gone to be with Christ in heaven whence the Holy Spirit came down to form the assembly on earth.

Chapter 256

Scripture Queries and Answers: the Indwelling of the Holy Ghost

Q. Acts 2; 8:10; 19 Rom. 8, &c.—It being allowed that Acts 2 is the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost to form and indwell the Church, but only taking effect on Jewish believers, would Acts 10:44 be explained of a similar descent upon the Gentiles in such a way as to supplement Acts 2? or should we avoid the word “descent” and call it a manifestation of power to them as from one already present on earth, but not having before formally operated on the Gentiles? I conclude that Acts 8:14-17 and Acts 19:1-7 are somewhat different, as in both these instances there was the intervention of the hands of the apostles.

Granting that we have at present no manifestation of the Holy Ghost to expect, such as was exhibited in any of the passages adduced above, ought, nevertheless, a believer to be conscious of the time when the Holy Ghost indwelt him, distinct from and after his regeneration? or is it a matter for his faith, deduced from such passages as Rom. 8? W. H. G. W.

I confess I feel a difficulty in seeing anything more than faith as a condition before receiving the Holy Ghost. Is not Acts 10 the normal mode of that gift to us of the Gentiles? May not the language of Eph. 1:13 be owing to the peculiarity of the circumstances of the disciples in Acts 19?

G.M.

A. It is evident, I think, that the great truth of the presence of the Spirit baptizing the believers was made good at Pentecost, of which Acts 10 records the extension or application to the Gentiles, as in fact none but Jews received Him at the beginning. Acts 8 and 14 appear to me supplementary and special, the one verifying the place of the apostles of the circumcision, as the other maintained Paul, and hence in both these subordinate instances there was imposition of hands. It was the outpouring on fresh souls of the Holy Ghost already sent down from heaven; and whatever difference is to be observed in the manner is due to the variety of the circumstances. But in every instance this gift of the Spirit is distinct from faith and consequent on it. It always supposes the soul born again, whether the interval be as short as the limits of the same discourse, or have days, weeks, months, or years between. That is, the Holy Ghost is given, not in, but after, quickening or the impartation of life. For a soul may have this new nature and no peace, no simple submission as yet to the righteousness of God. There may be a struggle under law, a trying to die to sin, fresh efforts under law to improve self. This often goes on in souls really quickened, as we read in Rom. 7, and may have seen frequently if we did not taste of this experience. The Holy Ghost is given when one rests by faith on the work of Christ. He regenerates the unbeliever, but He seals none till they believe the gospel. There must be life for sealing, and more too—a soul resting on the ground of accomplished redemption. Now souls are often quickened but tried and miserable as yet for some time afterward. So the Jews at Pentecost had repented and were even baptized before they received the Spirit; so the Samaritans believed and were baptized first, not to speak of the disciples of John at Ephesus. Nay, Cornelius himself had been for some time a godly and prayerful man, as his household may have been too. But that many were really first awakened under Peter's preaching, i.e. at Pentecost, I do not contest: only in all cases there is, as I judge, necessarily an

interval, let it be ever so brief, between life (or quickening), and the gift of the Spirit which seals the living believer. The possession of peace to them that believe goes along with this reception of the Spirit, as outward power also marked it of old for a sign to unbelievers.

Chapter 257

Scripture Queries and Answers: Two Miracles at Cana of Galilee

Q. What is the special connection or the contrast between the two miracles at Cana of Galilee, with the bearing of what lies between? (John 2—4.)

-A.

A. The first miracle was, as noticed heretofore, the expression of the change from Jewish purification to the joy of the millennium, when Jehovah shall restore Israel in truth; as the subsequent acting at Jerusalem was the judicial cleansing part of the same period. But from that act all is changed.

Jesus receives not man's acceptance of Him as a present thing by mere human faith. A man must be born again, Instead of the Messiah received by Israel, the Son of man must be crucified. And heavenly things are behind this; and “every one,” and “whosoever believeth,” the sphere of action. John Baptist reveals Him fully as to his person and testimony (if not also His relationship with Israel as bride.) (Chap. 3:29-36.)

Hence in chapter iv. He goes Himself through Samaria, and God's gift, man's conscience, spiritual worship, the Father's seeking such around Him as worshippers, and the Savior of the world, are brought out. Then He goes to Galilee (i. e., not established Judaism, but the slighted objects of God's mercy in a really fallen Israel), where the second miracle is the life-giving power by faith. He arrests the power of death when approached in need as able. This was His present service. He comes in this second character into Galilee, His Messianic reception being out of question. An analogous and larger expression of the full real state of things dispensationally (which this is not) is His going down to heal the ruler's daughter, but she is really dead. Meanwhile He heals, by virtue going out of Him, by the way when He is touched by active faith; and afterward He restores to life Israel, being really dead but in God's eyes only asleep (i. e., hid for a season though morally dead). This second miracle then is in special connection but contrast with the first.

Chapter 258

Self-Consciousness and the Infinite: Part 1

All effort to make consciousness, or self-consciousness, a rational perception of difference and identity is simply infirmity in abstraction. If I think of another, I know that I am not that other; but this is not necessary to, and no part of, the consciousness that I exist. When not asleep, I live in the perpetual consciousness of my existence without thinking of any other. Consciousness is necessary to human psychical existence. When I reflect on it, I may draw conclusions as to another; but this is reasoning about consciousness. Neither is it intelligence. This means “I know,” and has an object; but I am conscious of myself. To say that I am conscious of “I” makes “I” an object of “I” is absurd, and is really a denial of consciousness. When I speak of it to another and reason about it, then I make the conscious “I” an object of my reasoning; but then it has ceased to be consciousness.

It is this supposing with Plato that pure intellect is the beginning of existence which has falsified the reasoning on these points. Take Hegel's definition of subject without predicate, and you get at once the counter-proof of what I say. My affirming something about “I” does determine it; but this is a proposition, not consciousness, which, it must be repeated, ceases the moment I reason. For thus I have before me a thought, which is not consciousness. It is the thought of “I” looked at as an object of reasoning. And this is not self-consciousness of existence; for “I” as a thought is not “I” existing, but a mere thought. The moment I have a thought, I have something about which “I” is occupied, which is not self-consciousness. Where logic begins, self-consciousness ceases. We are constituted so as to be conscious of ourselves.

There is every confusion by making infinitude of good in God an extension; and this runs through ancients and moderns, Aristotle, Hegel, &c. Mansel answers them well, but does not, I think, reach the truth. If we speak of ideas we have human thought, and, of course, no conception of the infinite. Thus, when Aristotle says, The infinite is the whole potentially but not actually, we have parts, extension, and nonsense; but not an approach to infinitude as it refers to God. “The whole”—of what? If applied to God, this is necessarily materialism or Pantheism; it is very true if speaking of mere mathematics. But it is only an abstraction; and, applied to being, it is a contradiction; for a being is actual, and has ceased to be simply potential. The secret of all their fallacy (into which Mansel has fallen) is this: their infinite is the infinite of matter, that is, the infinite of finite, which is infinite nonsense. It may be all well enough on their ground, because they go no farther. But as to consciousness and infinitude, Hansel has not taken up any ground of truth as to man or God. The whole theory is materialism or Brahmanism.

But consciousness, self-consciousness, is the hinge of all this. I affirm that I am so constituted that I have the instinctive consciousness of “I.” This Hansel has not at all seen. I do not take Descartes' dictum” I think and therefore am” (that is, as if it made no difference). When one says “I think,” one must have a thought to think (i.e., an object, the intelligible as well as the intelligent). But when one says “I,” there is self-consciousness. I am so created as to say “I.” This does not say Descartes is wrong: he is right; but in his syllogism consciousness is the object of his reasoning. “I” is a thinking

being, and therefore “I” is a being. But this is drawn from consciousness, and has no force save in it. Yet it remains true that I can say “I” as the expression of self-consciousness. But, having this self-consciousness, I have senses; I am so constituted as to have the knowledge of existence with self-consciousness, and that as an excellence. It is that to which thought attaches itself. I cannot have knowledge without it; I can have sense and memory, but not reflective thought.

Hence, I attribute self-consciousness to God as necessary to intelligent existence, though I may not know the mode of it in God; I have no doubt it will be different and infinitely superior. I believe it to be different in God, because these reflex acts on self appear to be a state of imperfection—these reflex acts which are not consciousness, but through which I reason and estimate it. I cannot have consciousness of an object, and therefore cannot say that a dog has self-consciousness, because it cannot be such if I see it in another. My knowledge of what it is in myself is imperfect: there it is an object; but the consciousness is there to have knowledge (perfect or imperfect). Hence I do not know how it exists in God, because I cannot have knowledge of it. This is objective knowledge, imperfect even as to myself, absolutely impossible as to the how in God.

Only unconscious existence is brute matter—is what we mean by brute matter. It may have power by attraction, whatever it is; but consciousness makes the difference of having a basis for reflection: hence language.

The confounding moral infinitude (i.e., absoluteness of perfection) with extension, which I have noticed, is a very great blunder. But then I freely own that in strictness we cannot speak of attributes in God (moral ones). It is only a human way which (speaking reverently) divides God into parts. God cannot be or do evil: to say this is a limitation of power is only a delusion. If I say that He cannot do what He pleases, for He cannot do evil, the “cannot” applies to “what He pleases,” not to the power of God. As to acts of power, He can do everything. It is morally impossible that there should be in Him the contrary of what He is, i.e., of good and right. But this is not limiting power or anything; it is denying a limit to goodness, and saying it is absolute. Infinite goodness means merely goodness always perfect as goodness. That this is after all an imperfect thought as to God I admit, because it takes one characteristic by itself (that is through our finite nature), for nothing in God is characteristic (i.e., special and in part). It has been noticed elsewhere how thus Christ had no character, but was always what He ought to be wherever He was. Perfect goodness He was, but not goodness by itself as we conceive it. He was firm and severe where He ought, and good in that; He was tender and affectionate where He ought, and good in that; He was seemingly hard and deaf to need, and unchanged in goodness in that—in all love to His Father, and obedience. The divine nature in man which produced one produced all, perfect in each place in relation because perfect in itself.

Fichte's statement as to personality is totally false. It is not what you have become acquainted with in yourself, but the you that has become acquainted. Hansel's answer is economically true, because they go on this ground, but it is inadequate. I judge the whole system false for the reason stated, that thought is confounded with consciousness. Further, all confound the knowledge of with the knowledge that. I know certainly that I am; I have no real knowledge of what a soul is, or of its mode of acting through senses and a body. Whether it be separate or not, I am so constituted that, when I do not think or reason (perhaps if I do), I believe in a cause of effects, and that existence in

form or with anything characteristic supposes a cause—hence, a First Cause. But for the same reason that I know there must be, I cannot know or conceive it. That is, knowledge that is not, and may prove that I cannot have, knowledge of. So I may have knowledge that there is such a thing as endless, infinite, eternal; while the very words prove that I do not—cannot—conceive it. But the negative of finite is not the same as the conception of infinite (i.e., as its affirmation); and I have the sense of negativing finite though no positive conception.

Further, if I think about myself, I am finite and relative. If I judge the consciousness in connection with other things, consciousness is not relative and not finite or the contrary in itself. I do not admit that absolute must be infinite or finite. Consciousness is absolute; it has no qualities, no objective appearances or anything else. It is “I.” I am something; I think, do, perceive, &c. Hence I learn that the “I” is finite; but consciousness is only “I.”

Now I cannot conceive an infinite “I,” because I am a finite “I;” that is, I can have no positive knowledge of it; but its absoluteness as consciousness in me makes me understand the possibility of the existence of another absolute consciousness which may not be finite. As I learn the finiteness of my conscious “I,” and can in certain respects understand it, so I learn the certain existence of an “I” which must be conscious (i.e., not as a stone), and that it cannot be, as I am, finite, which is absolute in its “I,” but relative if it pleases, because I know it has pleased. But the how or what of its consciousness or relations (i.e., creation, sonship, redemption) I do not and cannot know that, because I negative the finiteness of that which is my knowledge. But I do not think a negative is the same as an affirmative, or is nothing in mind, though it be nothing positive. To say so is to say that all must be clear in my mind or that it does not exist, which is false. I have a thinking, feeling, perceiving, judging, and, if right, adoring, if wrong, God-hating, inward existence. What it is I have not in the smallest degree a clear idea of. So I have of God, to whom I clearly deny necessary relationship, finiteness or material infiniteness, whom I do not limit in will so as to deny relationship, yet in finite knowledge I cannot say what He is, but existence of whom (I can say what He is not) is not nothing in my mind, though I cannot say what it is, because I do know by consciousness what it is to exist, and I deny the conditions in which I exist.

I cannot quite accept the denial of capacity to abstract in the human mind (i.e., the estimate of a quality without a being it is attached to). It is apt to run into personification in order to get a clear idea.. To say I must think of some one good to think of goodness is not true. It is merely saying that, if I think of good acts, I must think of some one. But attributes, though for us a necessary conception, are a very inadequate one of God; if pushed to consequences, even false. We may speak attributively (practically), but not predicate anything of God; because then I separate the quality and get it in itself. I must make it infinite, and so exclusive in my mind; and other attributes are reasoned against. Thus if I say God is good, and therefore cannot do this or that, I have made Him only this, and all is false.

I deny that consciousness is in time, or has a “before” or “after.” Consciousness denies it in fact and in the nature of things. You must add “was,” or “will be;” but then I have lost consciousness, which is necessarily only present, and this is not time—is not measured, nor is time thought of.

Chapter 259

Self-Consciousness and the Infinite: Part 2

Mansel at the end of Lecture 3 happily contradicts himself. He is not exact. Thus, when he says we can conceive such attributes at the utmost only indefinitely but we cannot conceive them as infinite, how can he make the distinction if he cannot tell what infinite is? That one word proves the fallacy of his whole statement. But infinite, I have already said, does not mean material in infinitude; and attributes (i.e., predicates) spoken of God are always false when taken as the truth.

To say that things may not be what their appearances are is nonsense. What is a thing? what an appearance? I know nothing of a thing save its appearance, i.e., its relation to me. I have no other thing as a thing than that. The only other thing to mark it is its resistance to will, its contrast with the "I;" so that will goes where I cannot. It hinders the change of the relationship of "I." That is, I know its existence in contrast with "I" active in its absoluity, or "I" as a spirit. This we call matter: why not? Hyle, if you please (a spiritual body not so; but this is faith; it confirms the other).

Indefinite and infinite are not the same. Indefinite does not know whether a thing stops or where. We are so constituted as to believe necessarily in the infinite (finite implying it), but the reason of that precludes my knowing it. Finite is some apparent, or possibly apparent, being in what is the object of perception; but because that is finite as perceptible existence, I speak of its ending. Being limited, I must and do therein suppose and mean that beyond a limit there is what is beyond limit, illimitable. My idea of limit supposes this: I limit knowable existence, but its being a limit is in my mind in every case in spite of me. A thought that its being stopped or limited is a possibility of prolongation. It might go farther (i.e., I have an idea of what is beyond limit). Finite instead of excluding is founded on the idea of infinity. I have the idea that it is, must be, in idea; for stopping gives (or is identical with) as an idea, not stopping, but proves that the sense that there must be is identical with the sense of. The thought that it stops is founded on being stopped somewhere, i.e., that it might go on. It is merely saying, I am constituted with the sense that there is space (i.e., where a thing may stop or not stop) and duration (i.e., where it may or may not cease). I cannot but think infinite must be, but never think of it as the object of human power of thinking, for when, as to a clear conception of what is I think of what is, I think of what stops so far as any object of thought can go. I deny that mere infinitude in the sense of space has anything to do with God. Endless time onward is more accessible to me because I can have the idea of continuance when I have existence.

In space the object of thought becomes itself extended, whereas a thing only exists in time or eternity.

It is no part of itself. It may always exist, does not need to stop, a parte ante (as they say) cannot in se be thought of, because I have no known existence to go on with but in time or now. Taking now, however, I can conceive continuance; but the thought is more imperfect though certain in its nature.

We feel no need to suppose God infinite in space (on the contrary, it shocks us); but in time we do. The reason is simple. Infinitude in space is gross, material, not a moral central will and action. I do not judge of God as finite in space, because I do not materialize Him; but if He ceases in duration, and that is finite as to it, He ceases to be, because to endure when anything exists is not to cease to be. I fully believe there is an instinctive sense of God as supreme, i. e., supreme as to us, and reasoning on what He is consequent on this. It is a blunder to suppose that not being the author of evil limits Him. He can, as to power, do anything; but limiting means a stop being put to something in the direction in which it tends or might continue; whereas no evil is in God to be stopped. Power does not create evil. Were God the author of evil (save physical evil or punishment), it would be a limit to what He is—good. Mansel has not kept clear of the material idea of infinity. His adversaries are on that ground; but his great defect is not seizing consequences, at least in his reasonings, for he does state the thing in Lecture 4.

But I deny the sense of responsibility and a law to be the same thing, or either of them the knowledge of good and evil. A law may be the rule according to which we are responsible to One who has authority over us, but it is not the responsibility itself. Man was responsible before he had the knowledge of good and evil; and he had a law which implied no such knowledge. Responsibility is to a person: a law may be its measure. The knowledge of good and evil is a capacity of nature to discern right and wrong where there is no law. “So the man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil.” A law may give me God's measure of it as to me, and so the divine law did as to man. But obedience always and in everything is what we are responsible for, if the One above us is supreme—has such claims over us—to keep the law, if He has given one, and every commandment He gives. But this is only what the responsibility is shown in. The knowledge of right and wrong is in itself a contrast with law, because it is in us, and there is no one to whom (if that be all) we are responsible. We may be also responsible to another; and he, if a moral governor—not otherwise, holds us responsible according to that knowledge.

All as to law, moral obligations, man a law to himself by reflecting God's law, is false. Conscience is not pleasure, because there is lust; and conscience and sin came in together. Will and lust combine, and conscience is against them. But moral obligation is only rightly known at all when God's claim of obedience is allowed; for mere conscience is mere misery, or combines with pride and self-approbation.

To say that the knowledge of good and evil is necessarily implanted as a law by a lawgiver is utterly false. For this knowledge is in God; and what higher spiritual being has implanted it in Him, as a lawgiver? It can therefore be otherwise. We have it by sin.

The absolute claim of obedience is the highest obligation, moral obligation, if you please. Now that I have got a knowledge of good and evil, I shall surely attribute that to God and own His judgment. But only when Christ is revealed can it be said that the nature of the Deity is the absolute standard; for requirements from, are not necessarily conformity to, His will, which cannot be dissociated from His nature as a requirer. But duty does not flow from the nature of the superior, but in all cases (superior is not) from the relation in which the obliged person stands to the superior or any other person. No doubt, if the relation be with a divine Being or formed by Him, it will be right, and from some higher motive be right, though the relation be evil as a Christian slave. But obedience is right to God, though there be no law (it may be tested by a law) and no knowledge of good and evil in

itself. Then a knowledge of good and evil enters by disobedience. We become as to this as God. (Genesis 3) Hence there is the knowledge of right and wrong without reference to a superior, though reference may exist, and, I doubt not the least, has been perfected with it. Lastly, a law may be given, testing the obedience, not in innocence, but with a perfect measure of right and wrong, including all moral relationships. Christ is more than all this. He is the manifestation of the divine nature in man, and, when we are partakers of it, becomes the model and example, as well as the source of our walk and duty.

It is obedience as His was, because He was a man, to His Father in the place in which He stood, and so our mold of obedience, not to a claiming law, but having no will but God's—perfect in moral estimate; but it is also love as Christ's was, because it is the divine nature. Being holy too (that is, with a knowledge of good and evil), it has a horror of evil and is separated from it, but in us it is separated to God, which alone can be the separation from evil in us—in a creature which must have an object.

This gives a special character to Christ though He ever looked to His Father, and, as man, lived in dependence on Him, and, as man too, rejoiced in the joy that was before Him. Yet He was an object, instead of having one.

As regards personality, the conscious “I” is personality, though it cannot explain by reason in what it consists; but absolute dependence on God destroying personal freedom is all confusion. Dependence is equivocal. It means that I must derive existence and all here—more, have all from Him, or that I feel dependent on Him—look to Him. All this leaves out will, as contrasted with the obligation of obedience. Most of what is called personal freedom is simple sanction of sin. I ought always to obey—

“Lo, I come to do thy will” was Christ's uniform and sole motive. If freedom means that God does not purpose evil or hinder good, it is quite true; but if it means a right to have a will of one's own, it is sin—atheism. A man being really set to choose between evil and good (he may be, for trial to show him what he is) is alike horrible and absurd; because it supposes the good and evil to be outside, and himself neither. If he is one or other in disposition, the choice is there. To have a fair choice, he must be personally indifferent; but to be in a state of indifference to good and evil is perfectly horrible. If a man has an inclination, his choice is not free: a free will is rank nonsense morally; because, if he have a will, he wills something. God can will to create. But will in moral things means either self-will, which is sin (for we ought to obey); or an inclination to something, which is really a choice made as far as will goes. In truth it is never so. Man was set in good, though not externally forced to remain so. He first exercised his will—free-will, morally speaking—in eating the forbidden fruit, and was therein and thereby lost, and since then he has been inclined to evil. Dependence lies in this—that a creature must depend on God. He does so joyfully in perfect good, and on whom it comes has the claim when he knows God. Independence in will (there cannot be in fact), and disobedience, its fruit, is the condition of the old man. Dependence and obedience are the characteristics of the new man—of Christ. Save what grace works, God does leave the will free; but it tends in its nature away from God; because it is will. And the not looking to God must have an object below man. That wretched freedom man has, and perseveres in it but for grace, and resists the motives of grace, because it calls to God, to dependence and obedience of heart. And will wills itself: only one can be born of God, and have a

new nature—Christ as our life, and so be a new creature.

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Chapter 260

Self-Consciousness and the Infinite: Part 3

Personality is evidently in self-consciousness. Reality, that is, material reality, is that which hinders in its nature my will from finding nothing. I cannot of course have the consciousness of another's personality or self-consciousness; but I can see that he is one who has it, and know what it is by my own self-consciousness. Is a person in a swoon? I have lost part of the evidence of what shows personality. And if personality be lost in a swoon or like state, it only shows we do not know by reason what constitutes it, the link between soul and body being momentarily suspended; but the spring from which to reason is gone, has ceased, so that there can be none: I cannot say “I,” which begins reasoning. I have no doubt it is the soul. But if the swoon was forever, and I knew there was no self-consciousness, I could not conceive of it as a person. Yet if a soul was there and it could be two hundred years asleep with the body, I should conceive of it as a person. If I did not know it had a soul, I should say I could not tell.

Mansel's notion of body is merely the scholastic notion of substance. I say there is matter because according to my constitution two bodies cannot be in the same place. I cannot go through a door (a spirit can); but by God's will it is such that what I meet resists my will without any will of its own.

Nor do I say consciousness molds, nor that we only know phenomena, as Kant, &c., though there be apparent truth in this. God has so constituted things, and me, and others, that certain things produce certain effects and impressions on me. If a man with jaundice sees yellow, it is merely that he for the moment is so constituted, being in an abnormal state; but the knowledge of the constitution in both is in the same thing producing regularly the former effect.

To say with Kant, that the object is a phenomenon is nonsense, because the phenomenon includes the perception in me. If it appears, it appears to some one. But a thing is what produces the effect. If it be asked, What is it I cannot tell. Not a phenomenon, but what has produced a certain idea in me and others. What I think of first is my perception; but perception makes me think of what produces it. A dream only shows that memory and combination, without the conscious will, may continue in that state.

That the truths as to God are only regulative is abominable and untrue. Truths do not regulate passions; and in religion, if true, God is revealed in His absolute nature: not as material extension, of course, it is a low material idea, but as He is. He is light—He is love; Christ is the perfect revelation of Him. It does not satisfy philosophy, because philosophy has nothing to do with it—it has only ideas, and no idea is love. “He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.” To say that action, not knowledge, is man's destiny is very bad indeed. The knowledge of God—that is, the Father—and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, is eternal life. And we have fellowship with them. Action is a mere consequence in its place, because we are then, as partaking of the divine nature, like God, and have to act in love in our little sphere. And this correspondence with the Absolute is exactly what, if not required, is given. We know God and are imitators of God; we are dependent, no doubt, but truly.

The energy of matter is said to be motion; of mind, consciousness. I doubt this. Mansel always leaves out self-consciousness—its truest and deepest name. Will is the energy of the soul. For either consciousness or will we cannot find the link with matter. There are pairs of nerves, one of sensation (consciousness), another of motion. But the energy in Mansel's sense—analogous to motion—is clearly in the latter. No man can discover the link, it is true, how will raises my hand. But Mansel is infected with what he reasons against. Gracious kindness, goodness, relationship with man according to divine qualities, is not inferior to the natural notions of infinitude, &c., which are really material.

It may be alleged that will is no action of the mind. This is a matter to be decided by the definition of mind. If taken strictly as the thinking power, thinking (not consciousness) is its energy. Mansel has blundered all through, because he has judged thought to be the first element of mind, and infinitude to relate to matter or space where God is spoken of. In the last he has fallen into the trap of the enemy.

As to cause, it is power operating by design; not that the design and the power are necessarily united in the agent producing. The design may be in one only mind, and power set in motion in another. Hence causes have been distinguished in nature, inaccurately perhaps in division, but justly, into causa causans and causa causata. Will, design, power in activity are a cause. The how may not be known; but this does not hinder my seeing a cause and effect. When I say cold causes water to swell, God is supposed to have so constructed as to design, His will to have led Him so to form it, and the power is seen in effect. How it comes about physical science may or may not discover, but can only come at last to created ordinances. God may have produced uniformly or universally operative force, which we call a law, and sustains that continually by His will. It can only be so at any moment by His will. When He does not will it, it ceases. Laws need not be changed for a miracle, but that the same will should operate sovereignly by those laws. Thus suppose the presence of the soul in a body according to a given law animates it in a given way which we call life. A person dies. God calls the soul back into the body to be perfect according to the given law. No law is changed, but a miracle is performed. Supposing nerves and muscles operate in a particular way where communication is established with the brain, the communication has been interrupted, never formed. By one word (that is, by His will) God, or one acting by His command, restores the communication. No law is changed, but a miracle is performed. It is not a mere general law. It is the will which formed the law acting, not in suspending it in any case, but causing by an act of power the existence of a case in which its operation was renewed or begun where it did not before. A body specifically heavier than water sinks. The attractive power of the earth is not changed, but the body is so constructed by will and power for a time that it does not operate on it, and a man walks on the water. This does not suppose the action of the will and power of God; that is a miracle, but not a change in the laws of nature. The will of God may withdraw an individual from the power of a law without changing the law as a law at all. The exception only proves the rule. Men have said, If God stopped the earth for Joshua, so as to make the sun and moon stand still for Joshua, all would have been flooded and destroyed; just as if He would not have stopped the motion of all at the same time (that is, the action of the moving power). What stopped the earth stopped all with it, my head as well as my heels. This is ridiculous. The question is, Can God will? He is not God if He cannot. Can I?

(Continued from page 304)

Chapter 261

Self-Consciousness and the Infinite: Part 4

Mansel is on wholly false ground as to this, because (while saying it is impossible by ideas) he confounds the revelation of God with ideas of Him, or human knowledge. He does not see here revelation of God in Christ, with the Holy Ghost giving perception of it and dwelling in us. Hence he runs back to acknowledge the incapacity which is true of mind as absolutely true, and makes the test of truth the harmonious consent of man's faculties. If so, I have no test as to God; for they cannot know or test Him. A revelation is another thing; first, objectively, and then by divine capacitating power to the soul. God is light; Christ was the light of the world. God is love; Christ was love in the world; but the eyes must be opened to see the light, a new nature be communicated to enjoy it. The same thing must be to estimate the love, as shown to me a sinner (without which in its own uncaused unsustained character, i.e., as divine, it is not known) and as enjoyed by a saint—perfect as putting me in the absolute enjoyment of it, for it makes us to be as Christ (see 1 John 4), and that in full righteousness and holiness. (See his Lecture v.) How sad that any sentence should be exactly the opposite of what Christ meant!

Even if I take the conscious “I” as marking knowledge of a person, I have no objection to use it as regards the Trinity in speaking of human language. For why—because the conscious “I” in man supposes distinctness from any other “I” —should the divine consciousness be a human one? Why not the consciousness of subsisting in unity—not ours? We cannot conceive it by our minds so as to explain it in language, but yet can recognize as truth undoubtingly “I and my Father are one.” We apprehend it not by thought but by the Spirit. He “hath given us an understanding that we should know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.” The perfect revelation of God in Christ is the strongest proof that limited existence to our minds (or the contrary) has nothing to do with the perfect revelation and knowledge of God. Love, holiness, absence of evil, presence of good, were there. He was limited as a man on earth as to space, yet He was all the while in heaven. He conferred power to work miracles elsewhere, and wrought them far off from Himself; yet it was a power in Him. He was the truth. He skewed what everything was. from God by direct revelation, and all evil, by its opposition to himself, vanity by the revelation of the true God. I recognize a perfect absolute revelation of God in Christ. I” know God.” But this is a revelation of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, yet one God.

When I have spoken of the consciousness of personality, yet of unity, I would not darken counsel by words without knowledge, or pretend to speak metaphysics on what is known only by revelation (but of which, when revealed, I may see the perfectness), but find the Lord saying, “I and my Father” (that is, consciousness of personal distinctness), yet He acids, “are one;” so that there was the consciousness of unity. And why not? Why should not distinctness of willing and acting, and the consciousness of it be there, yet in perfect community of thought, will, and community of undistinguished Godhead without separate being, as a source of being able to say “I am?” None could have known it (part of its character as known is in revelation): but when revealed, I see not why we may not see its perfectness, and that indeed (which is the way we know it too) man would

have had nothing to say to God as a moral being without it, or only in this way. And so it really is; but we come to it by our wants, not by metaphysics, which I have no thought of applying to the doctrine. But having a revelation, one sees how it connects itself with the human conception of it.

As to moral law, the notion that it is of necessary and universal obligation, and so absolute (i.e., not subject to the forms of human conception), that it must be “the measure and adequate representation of the moral nature of God,” and that our knowledge of the Divine Being is identical with that of our own moral duties, is just the fruit—wise as men may think themselves—of unsound educational or traditional ideas about the law, as if it were the highest rule, the transcript of the divine mind. It is nothing of the sort. Had men only seen God's activity of love in Christ, and that it is our pattern and rule—in a word, Christ as the full revelation of God in every way, all this confusion would have been avoided.

Law is an authoritatively imposed obligation. This cannot be God's nature and position. His liberty in love (and there is no love without, but in, liberty) is wholly set aside (i.e., the whole activity of His nature, His nature itself, for He is love) if this principle be true. To make law my nature is to make love impossible.

Besides, the application of the moral law to God as law is impossible, whether we take it as love to God or your neighbor, or the prohibition of evil, as is evident. But it is not because the moral law is not absolute, i.e., above human thoughts. Such reasoning is just the fruit of not getting beyond thought (Mansel's and Kant's error here).

Morality, or moral obligation is in the nature of all relations which imply a claim; it is the bond flowing from them. That man has had all manner of rules is true; but when God says, “The man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil,” it certainly implies that right and wrong was of an absolute nature. But it is the application of a law which makes obligatory a course imposed by authority (though it may be moral too). The knowledge of good and evil is the perception of it in itself, without a law or its being imposed. God does know, doubtless, good and evil according to the perfection of His own nature. But it is a condition of His nature to discern it; it was not of Adam's before his fall. He was innocent; he enjoyed God's goodness unsuspectingly, and did nothing else. There was no occasion to discern, nor capacity to do so. In the fall he acquired this capacity. He could now say, This is good and that evil; but he was under sin.

That moral law is excellent and absolute, because we discern good and evil, is a mistaken way of putting it. What we have is a capacity to discern right and wrong; not a law, but a moral condition of my mind. But, on the other hand, it is not subject to forms of thought, because it is not a question of thought. It is in the nature of the relationship; it is conscience, and not thought; it may be in us misled by thought.

It is all a blunder to say obligations cannot arise by revelation; because I may learn the existence of a relationship, or I may be brought into a relationship. Thus, so far from thinking a moral obligation cannot be formed, I affirm that all the obligations of a Christian are new, because he reckons himself dead and alive to God through Christ as risen. His obligations flow wholly from his new condition. This may call for recognizing sub modo something that subsisted before, as parents and children, &c.

The reason it is wholly untrue that the knowledge of good and evil gives us God's nature is, that the knowledge of good and evil is the source of discerning right and wrong, which right and wrong flow from the relationship a being is in. Now God is either in none (unless within Himself, of which we cannot judge, because it is so), or, if He enter into any in creative will, He is not in the same as we are. Hence the obligation cannot be the same. All we say is, that He will not destroy (as between ourselves or between us and Him) the terms of relationship in which He has set us. If I had slaves or children and gave them something to enjoy in equal shares, it would be wrong for one to take from or defraud the other; but if I had not given up the title, I might do so. If God has revealed His nature to me and my relationship to Him, He does not change, and so the duty abides. But if the relationship changes and I become a son, the duty does.

The capacity to discern good and evil is the capacity to discern these duties or the breach of them. But if the relationship is one of authority, then there is duty to obey. There may be a mere arbitrary command; and I say the thing (if I have the knowledge of good and evil) was not bad in itself, but obedience is the place of one subject. Thus it was with Adam: there was no evil in eating of the tree if it had not been forbidden. It was only a test of obedience. Now we have more than this. I say such a thing is wrong even if not forbidden. As to the measure of it, I may be misled. Hence God has given a prescribed measure—the law. But the faculty of such discernment is in me. I call something wrong. I have a personal faculty to discern that the act does not suit—is not conformed to the relation in which the responsible being stands. One takes a knife from another: I hold it to be evil. A parent does so from a very young child: it is not evil but good. It depends on the relationship.

Hence the only true absolute good is free. It is love, God Himself, and that in fact in the highest sense where there is no obligation at all, but where the responsible one had failed. If God, though surely sovereign, gives a promise, I expect Him to fulfill it, though I do not deny higher reasons may lead to its not being accomplished. But as a general promise, I reckon on it, because in that act Ile has been pleased to put Himself in relationship. If there be a higher claim, it may fail but is in His own sovereign knowledge. But I can say, It is impossible for God to lie, because when He has given His word, He has been pleased to oblige Himself. He might for higher reasons destroy the one to whom the promise was made and it would fail; but He cannot be inconsistent with what He is. But it is important to remember, what moralizers seem anxious to forget, that the knowledge of good and evil came to man in and by that in which he fell.

That relationship is the basis of the sense of right and wrong is every way evident. Thus, not knowing the relationship of angels among themselves, I cannot tell what is right and wrong among themselves; I do of creatures of God; I say they must love one another, and love and obey God. I must not worship them: they must worship God.

Moral duties then are absolute in so far as that they do not depend on ideas as formed by any means at all, but are the judgment of an internal capacity; they only subsist in known relationships and last as long as they. But they belong to relationships; they are the expression of one's consistency with it. And as long as I conceive it, I conceive the duty. Right and wrong did not exist for Adam in themselves (i.e., without a command). It is not merely responsibility personally to God; that there was. God forbade. Man might not eat; but there was no sense of a thing wrong in itself; because inconsistent with a relationship, he being able to judge of it itself. There was nothing

inconsistent in Adam's mind with his relationship to God; his mind followed it without a question. He could think of nothing in itself inconsistent with it; that nature of thought was not in his nature.

But there is a difference between God's knowledge of good and evil, and mine. I deny wholly that human morality is manifested in the form of a law of obligation. The knowledge of good and evil is the internal consciousness of what is conformable to position and relationship without a law of obligation. let it is not properly absolute, because it flows from relationship; only it attaches to the idea of the relationship as so contained in it. Moralists on both sides seem wholly wrong here. Goodness, properly speaking, is not morality, but love exercised where there is not an obligation. The only difficulty is to distinguish Adam's case from right and wrong. The eating of the tree was no departure from conformity to the relationship Adam was in to God; he would have eaten it innocently as a matter of course. It was wrong simply to do what was forbidden, because forbidden. This leads to distinguish responsibility to a person absolutely, and the knowledge of right and wrong. That is, law and morality are opposed in nature; though law be the right measure of right when it recognizes existing relationship, but where the law makes the obligation of the particular case, this means that otherwise there was not and could not be any knowledge of right and wrong (it would have denied Adam's innocence to suppose any), but an arbitrary command, however wise a one.

To say that duty ought to be followed, is only saying there is duty. But two straight lines enclosing space is somewhat different; it means if two do not approach they do not meet. God knows good and evil, i.e., He recognizes relationship as it exists. I know good and evil now (i.e., my will apart). I recognize these relationships as they exist; but what has this to do with God's nature? His morality, speaking reverently, would be based on the relationship. He is in Himself; but He is in none, as we have seen, unless He pleases to put Himself in one: I am by virtue of my place. He recognizes mine, and judges, but is not in it. I deny eternal morality save as an idea; it has no relation to Him at all. Absolute morality is nonsense. God did not create morality, but the relationship without which there could be none. If one supposes only the absolute God, there is no morality. Morality in respect of what? I cannot suppose it but with created responsibility, i.e., creatures and consequently relationship.

I am disposed to think that, such as man was, he must have fallen to get the knowledge of good and evil. He knew no good objectively so as to prefer it in innocence. The test he was under was not preference of good to evil or evil to good, but obedience. It could not have been the former, because he must have known the two to decide (i.e., not have been innocent). But then to go right with that knowledge he must have been a holy being, i.e., a being with a spiritual nature divine or sustained of God which in nature delighted in good and abhorred evil, so as not to be in a state of probation because the decision was in the nature itself, so that there was nothing to test. But if he came to know good and evil and was not decided against evil, he was already in an evil state. Besides he could not get into a condition to decide between good and evil; and if he had not known them before he must decide; he has to exercise a will as free and thus he is out of obedience, the only right state and is in evil. A nature formed holy and sustained of God is decided in nature, and then only obeys. God could have given a nature such to man; but then it would. have been a new creation, as it is now.

It is a mistake to think infinite power in itself inconsistent with finite power. Two infinite independent powers cannot be, because they contradict each other. They are not infinite for they cannot destroy each other. But power being only the faculty to do all things, not the actual doing of them, the existence of a finite subordinate power is no contradiction to God. Creation tends to give the idea of a final cause, a framing will, and hence can hardly be ascribed to a finite agent. But forming new objects on subsisting laws may well belong to such.

(Concluded from page 313)

Chapter 262

The Serpent's Judgment

The skeptic sneers at the sentence on the serpent, the meaning of which is evidently its entire humiliation. Going on its belly and eating dust would present this thought to any one familiar with scripture. The import of the words is, beyond all question, the expression of judicial degradation, and the feeding on it even to death. Hence its full, final judgment is expressed in these words, “and dust shall be the serpent's meat.” But this one sentence, thus ignorantly scorned, gives the source, explanation, and judgment of what has characterized the universal race of man over the whole globe to an extent without rival; unless perhaps the worship of the sun, which was generally identified with it. Where the polished idolatry of Greece and Rome has never penetrated, the exaltation of the serpent has reigned paramount, and even in all its details proves the truth of the Mosaic account of the fall. The fact that a single verse of simple statement accounts for what has governed the whole world, though it embraces nothing of the corruption that characterized what so governed it, is the strongest possible of the divinity of the record we possess.

It is evidently impossible here to give an account of the Ophiolatreia, or Serpent-worship. I can only notice some of the remarkable elements of it. It is found in China, Egypt, Babylon, England, France, Ireland, North America, Mexico, Peru, Russia, Scandinavia (i.e., Sweden and Norway), Greece, Italy, Africa in its most savage parts, Palestine, India, in a word, all over the world. It is connected with the principal gods of the East, of Greece, of Rome, and with the most solemn worship of the countries mentioned. In Sweden and Norway, and in Macedonia, serpents were kept in the houses as household gods; in Greece, and elsewhere, in temples, as public ones. They were considered the preservers of Athens, as of Whidah on the coast of Guinea; and the savage of Louisiana carried a serpent and the sun as the symbols of his religion, and tattooed them on his skin.

If we turn to the elements which characterized it, we find it accompanied with a tree, and a naked woman constantly its priestess. In India and Mexico, the deliverer is bitten in the heel by the serpent, which, in these and other cases, is destroyed by being smitten on the head. Further, he is worshipped often erect, and not prostrate on his belly, and was fed alive with sweet cakes of honey. We find him frequently associated with a tree, and conversing with a woman; and this in countries, in sculptures, and in heathen accounts which leave no possibility of alleging fraud or intention.

It has been shown that the early history of Greece relates to colonies partly from Egypt, but partly from the Hivites, serpent-worshippers driven out from Palestine by Joshua, as indeed were the Carthaginians. Can any one doubt for a moment of the bearing and origin of all this, and the importance of showing that that Old Serpent which had elevated himself to be the god of all the world, was, by present ocular proof, a venomous, prostrate reptile. There he was, manifested and marked out by his condition under the finger of God. And when we see the whole world filled everywhere with these traditions of the serpent, of the worship of the serpent (and of the serpent erect and not on his belly), is not the immense moral importance of this declaration (which in one

little word explains it all, gives the terrible and real secret of it all, and reveals the ruined condition of the rebellious and disobedient man) evident to any serious sober-minded person? Scripture has not invented these facts; the whole state of the world, as the research and learning of the nineteenth century have brought to light, has demonstrated the truth of the account given in Genesis-the divine importance of the key given in a few short words. That is, the whole history of the universe demonstrates the folly of the flippant sneers of ignorant or willfully blind infidelity, spinning thoughts out of itself, as a spider its web, to catch those who may be foolish enough to fall into it, and neglecting the universal testimony of the world.

I may just add, as curious, that a living serpent was kept in the temple of Esculapius, the god of healing. So serpent-amulets among the Britons were supposed to preserve from all harm. Serpents were carried in baskets by the Bacchanals, Bacchus having in Greek the same name as the object of serpent honor in India, as indeed was the case with another name in Egypt.

Another remarkable fact connected with it was, that the notion of gaining wisdom from serpents was universal. This went even to the notion, that eating their flesh gave it. They gave oracles. The progress of idolatry seems to have been this—Satan seized upon the idea of God in men's minds and the obscure traditions of what had happened; where he could, he connected this directly with himself; and serpent-worship was universal as we have seen. Still, the sun being the great and splendid benefactor of man, and in unity, man's heart connected this with one supreme God. This allied itself with the universe. Thus the serpent and sun-worship, both being intimately associated with the idea of the unity of Deity and the universe, became connected.

Sometimes the worship of the sun drove out the serpent-worship in its grosser form, yet was always connected with it—how should it be otherwise? Thus Apollo, who is the sun, established his worship at Delphi by slaying Typhon, an immense serpent, who was also said to have been cast down from heaven by Jupiter. He then gave oracles in his place; still the serpent was sacred to him, and was otherwise associated with the Delphic worship. So, in the Scandinavian mythology, the great serpent produced by the evil spirit, Loke, against the Supreme God, is cast into the sea. He is the enemy of the gods. Thor will destroy him, but he will die in doing it. So the wolf, produced by the evil spirit, now chained, will in the end break loose and devour the sun.

On the other hand, Hercules, and other such mystic personages answering to Thor in many respects, a kind of god-man, destroys serpents in all manner of fables. And Krishna in India, and Teotl in Mexico reproduce traditional accounts of scripture redemption, connected with what is said of the serpent in Genesis. Caesar produces, as the doctrine of the Druids, that man's sins could only be expiated by man's death.

Now idolatry, as far as we can say from scripture only, came in after the flood. Hence we have the next step in idolatry, a vague tradition of a reign of bliss under Saturn, which recalled Paradise; and then his three sons, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, who became the supreme gods of heaven, earth, and sea; the ark being so distinctly remembered that in the grand procession they carried a statue about in a kind of ship. Indeed, it is very probable that the Greek word translated “temple” is really identical with that of “ship.” That is, in a word, the worship of the serpent connected itself with that of the sun and whole host of heaven; and, in cultivated Greece and Rome, merged, though retaining both, into traditions as to Paradise, Noah's three sons, and the flood. The purest of all serpent-worship was perhaps in England.

This serpent-worship retained its power longer than we suppose. In idolatrous Egypt, so judged in scripture, there was a sect of Gnostics who connected it with their pretended Christianity; and under the name of Ophites (that is, “serpent-worshippers") had a living serpent which was let out to glide over the sacramental elements to consecrate them, it being the source of wisdom; exactly as was done with Isis, the great object of serpent-worship, on whose temple was written, “I am all that hath been, and is, and shall be; and my veil no mortal hath ever removed;” and exactly as the worship in England was carried on in the serpent-temple at Abury and other places, as recorded in British bards' writings of that day.

In Brittany, in France, where the remains of these dragon-temples are abundant, it is curious to see the mounts (“barrows” as they are called) where the sun was worshipped with the serpent, now all dedicated to St. Michael, whom the Revelation represents to us as the destroyer of Satan's power. And within man's memory, in a village wake, the serpent-worship was commemorated, though none understood what it meant.

But I have said enough to demonstrate the importance of showing that the serpent was to go on his belly and eat dust. The world has consecrated it—has shown the place the serpent had in this history. The connection of it with the worship of the host of heaven, is shown in the fable that Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, seized hold of the great serpent that was attacking Jupiter and the gods, and flung it into heaven, where it became the constellation Draco. Indeed, all the constellations are idolatrous gods. And, to this day, the planets known to antiquity are all marked by the symbolical signs connected with this mystic worship—that of a circle and cross.

In a word, while many traditions of truth were preserved, the serpent was deified. The Englishman little knows, when he tends his sheep or plows over Hackpen, that the hill he has beneath his feet has for its name “the serpent's head” (for such, in old British, is the meaning of Hackpen; and there was the head of the immense serpent formed by stones, the circle of deity through which it passed being in the center, and known as Abury, a name which is undoubtedly supposed to recall the universal name given to the serpent as worshipped); nor that Arthur Pendragon is “Uther of the dragon's head;” nor that when he calls his mother, he uses most probably one of the names of Isis, the Egyptian goddess, which identifies death and the woman; for Moth signifies “death.”

The reader who wishes to have more details on this must consult Bryant and Faber; or, if he has not access to these, a work more popular, but with, perhaps, fuller information—Deane's “Worship of the Serpent.”

Chapter 263

John 20, 21: or, The Single Heart of Grace

When a person is seen pursuing his way or his purpose, undaunted by resistance on the one hand, unseduced by solicitations on the other, we have a full witness of the singleness and devotedness of his soul to the business he has in hand.

So likewise, when we see him refusing all occasions either to enrich, or to display, or to gratify himself, intent on the good of others, we have a like witness of the singleness and graciousness of his heart.

I judge that the way of the Lord, after His resurrection, as recorded in these chapters, is of this second character. Occasions are used by Him only as serving the blessing and instruction of His saints, though they might naturally and without effort have ministered to Himself in one or other of these different ways.

His first appearing is to Mary. He discovers Himself to her, as she was fondly mistaking Him for the gardener. The moment must have been very grateful to Him. He was in company with something that was as clear to Him as the whole range of creation could afford—the affection and desire of a good soul, of one who, at that moment, as He well knew, was counting His dead body more important to her than all the world beside. He does not, however, take up the occasion in this character at all. He does not indulge Himself through it. He does not linger where affection like this was gratifying His heart. The occasion He uses only for others, and sends the loving Mary away on a mission which was to bear light and joy to the hearts of others.

So, in the next scene, He joins the disciples and shows Himself to them. They are glad—glad with a human or natural joy. They receive Him, as of old, into their midst, and, like Mary, were ready to gratify Him with every token and expression of attachment. But no: He will not meet them in such a place or in such a character. He came not to be indulged in the midst of such affections, pleasant as all that would have been to his heart of love. He at once blesses them, and prepares to make them a blessing to others. He imparts the Holy Ghost to them; and, causing them to know the peaceful fruit of His own accomplished travail, bids them go forth and share it with others.

Just in like spirit He deals with Thomas afterward. The material here was different. Mary's fondness was grateful to Him, but it could not detain Him from His purpose of blessing others; Thomas' slowness must have been contrary to Him, unattractive, uninviting. But neither could this hinder Him from doing the same gracious work. Simply to bless Thomas, He pays the disciples another visit; and when He had accomplished that, He leaves them as before.

A fourth occasion only, and perhaps more illustriously, exhibits the same. The disciples go together to their former fishing. They were on the lake where ofttimes their Master had resorted with them. And they are fishermen again. But Jesus is the same Jesus also. Resurrection has made no difference. He takes them up, as of old, in the midst of their nets and their fishing, and gives them a draft again. And at the end, He pledges them a better service and a richer feast and companionship with Himself in all things.

He waits, however, on His business with wonted singleness of heart. It is not to display, enrich, or indulge Himself that He is now in action. It is for us. For when we find Him here in possession of Peter's heart, when He gets such a piece of property as that (precious to Him as it was, and which He would not have been without for the world) still He uses it for others. “Do you love me, Peter?” “Yes, Lord,” says Peter. “Feed my lambs, feed my sheep,” says Jesus. He uses His possessions for His poor people.

Such are the bright occasions which illustrate singleness of purpose, this devotedness to His business, which marked and animated the mind and path of the Lord in these chapters. How do they convince us that the resurrection had made no change in Him!

But, further, the style of the Spirit in writing is just the same as this style in the Lord's acting. The Spirit might have recorded many and many a thing beside, had the object been to display the Lord. (See chap. xx. 30, 31.) But this was not the object, and therefore this is not done. All that is done is to record what is enough to lead sinners to the faith that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and thus to life through His name.

Blessed testimony! blessed warrant for our souls to trust Him altogether! He goes on with His purpose to bless us, never using a single occasion to either enrich, display, or indulge Himself.

I speak after the manner of men; but in all this I ask, can anything more effectually lead the heart into confidence than this? Is it not true in Him and in us? Do we not see it so? Is not all darkness passing away and the true light of perfect love here shining before us and upon us?

Chapter 264

Thoughts on Song of Solomon

Of all the songs of Solomon, amounting to 1,005, there is only one that has come down to our day. Written by the Spirit of God, and inserted in the volume of the book, whilst some inspired communications have perished, this survives, and will, may we not say it, be a comfort and delight to the godly remnant of his people in the latter day, when the circumstances of the spouse, described in this song, will be found to delineate, as the prophetic word of God Only can, the condition of the people, whose hearts have been turned to the Lord during the time of Jacob's trial, and the domination of Antichrist. But, as it gives us the exercises of the heart that seeks after an object which will satisfy it, and the unchanging affection of the one it seeks after, we can read it with profit to ourselves, since, whilst illustrating the changing character of our affection towards the Lord, it brings out the abiding character of His love. To point out the unchanging character of His love as here brought out is the object of the present paper.

The words of the spouse commence the book. We hear her voice at the beginning, she breaks the silence as it were; and we hear her voice at the close. She speaks of her beloved, and to him. He speaks to her and her only, and manifests to her his love. She begins by declaring her desire to receive the proof of his affection. She knows what his love is. “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.” She can say, assigning as a reason, “for thy love is better than wine.” It is no stranger that she thus addresses. “The virgins,” she continues, “love thee.” Under what circumstances there had been previous acquaintance is not related. Nothing of the past is told us about him, but she acquaints us with something of her previous history. She had been in trial. (Chap. 1:5, 6) Her mother's children were angry with her, and made her keeper of the vineyards. Of him we learn what offices he fills—he is king and shepherd, and Solomon is, as such, the representative of the blessed.

At the outset of the song she is occupied with two things, her beloved and herself, throughout it, he is occupied with but one object, his loved one. “I am black but comely.” “I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley,” she says. To her companions she said the first, to her beloved she addressed the second. Her description is correct, it is no overstatement; he assures her she is comely (chap. 1:10), and tells out that as “the lily among the thorns so is my love among the daughters.” (Chap. 2:2.) He thus takes up her language about herself. She is all that in his eyes. He sees a comeliness in her though she may have been exposed to the sun's rays. Why should she think of herself? Fair is she in his eyes, nor is that all; he would have her with him, and she knows it, for she gives us the very words of his invitation. (Chap. 2:8-13.) He will not be satisfied without her, so he invites her to go forth with him. Her countenance too he would see, her voice he would hear. “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away,” he says. What is her answer? “Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved: and be thou like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bether.” (Chap. 2:17.) She would have him with her, but does not respond to the invitation to go forth with him. The ordinary time of day for going out had not arrived, the suited hour she thinks, had not approached. She would judge for herself of the fitness of the time to go forth instead of leaving that, as she ought to have done, to him. She did not go forth as he asked

her, so does not find him with her, as she had requested. His absence draws out her heart after him, and she goes out at an unseasonable hour to seek for him. Her question to the watchmen shows where her heart is, as, full of him she loves, she mentions not to them the name of her beloved. (Chap. 3:3.) She finds him, and constrains him to return with her. In this she shows her love, and in being thus constrained he proves his love to her. She had declined his invitation, he refuses not to go with her. He had been slighted by her, she should not know what it was to be slighted by him.

After this we have a description of his majesty coming out of the wilderness. It attracts; and the daughters of Jerusalem are exhorted to go forth, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the days of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart. All are occupied with him. With what is he occupied? Is he thinking of his majesty? Do his thoughts center round his crown? He is occupied, but it is with her who is his love, and with nothing else. Of her he thinks, with her beauty and sweetness he is taken up. She had failed, but his love could not fail. “Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair: thou hast doves' eyes.” (Chap. 4:1.) Before he had endorsed what she had said of herself, here, unasked, he expresses what she is. What he had said in chapter 1:15 he reiterates at the beginning of this chapter. How little could she have expected this after the way she had acted. But he does more than this. At first he had only spoken of her eyes; now he gives a full description of his spouse. Nothing escapes his notice, with every feature he is conversant, and all find favor in his sight. So we read, “Thou art all fair my love; there is no spot in thee.” (Chap. 4:7.) Comely and fragrant is she to him. Beautiful objects of nature and art alone could describe her appearance; the most valuable spices that were cultivated must be enumerated and massed together to express her sweetness. What delight he finds in her. How true, how deep must be that love which is thus occupied with such an one as her. To him she is all that is comely, all that is fragrant, and this he tells her himself. She knew his desire for her presence with him; she learns from his lips what she is in his eyes.

Another opportunity is offered her of responding to his invitation; but how does she use it? He calls to her from without, not to go out to him, but to open the door that be might enter the chamber where she was. But a short time before she had taken him into her mother's chamber. He stands without and tells her his condition, his “head filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night.” Surely, she will at once open the door to him. She bears his voice, knows what he says, but remains where she is. “I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?” (Chap. 5:3.) Self comes in, and keeps her from opening the door. At first we saw her thinking of her appearance, now she thinks of the trouble it will cost her. Before when he had spoken, she intimated that his invitation is premature, now she would tell him his call was out of season. Need we wonder at her? Have not many practically acted as she did?

Again he withdraws himself, he could not act otherwise, for she must be made sensible of her coldness. Yet be would assure her of the unchanging character of his love. She might change or grow cold, he could not. She opens the door, but he was gone. Was that all she found? In his love he leaves her a token of affection which she well understood. “I rose to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.” Whence came this? “My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door.” He had anointed the handle of the door with this perfume in token of his unabated affection, even when she was cold towards him. What proof could she give of her love? His withdrawal witnessed of her

remissness. What a proof had he left of his as her hands dropped with myrrh, and her fingers with sweet scented myrrh on the handles of the lock.

A second time she seeks him abroad in the streets. Her remissness draws her a second time into a position unsuited for such an one. The watchmen find her without, and put her to shame as they took away her veil. Her companions are made acquainted with her condition, as she sends a message by them to her beloved if they found him. She might have spoken to him face to face, but she would not, and now she is reduced to be uncovered by the keepers of the wall, and to solicit the help of her companions to recover her beloved. To their request about him, she answers at once, giving a full description of his appearance. He had seen beauty in her, she had seen comeliness in him. Suffering as she did for her conduct towards him, she is once more with him (for he was willing to be found of her), and he is proved to be unchanged, for, as before, he speaks first. He waits not to hear what she has to say in extenuation of her fault; he speaks, not to upbraid or condemn, but to assure her of her beauty in his eyes. “Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah; comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.” As before, he has but one object of special delight—herself. “There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one.” How perfect was his love! It had an object at the beginning of the song from which nothing would divert it. Unworthy of it she was, but he could not change. He sought her, he desired her, his dove, his undefiled was but one, there was not another to be compared with her in his eyes.

At the close of the song (chap. 8:12) she avails herself of an opportunity of sheaving his value in her eyes. “My vineyard, which is mine, is before me; thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.” But is this what he cared for? Would the thousand pieces of silver satisfy him? Let us hear his response: “Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it.” Her voice to him was more refreshing than any present of money she could bring. The sound of her voice he desired to hear; nothing short of that would fully please him. What he had said in chapter ii. 14 is what he concludes with here. His last recorded wish is to hearken to her voice. “Cause me to hear it.” In him there was—in Him who is really figured here there is—no change.

A few words to point out, as far as the original guides us, where the change of speakers takes place, may be of use.

Chapter 1:1, the title; 2-7, the spouse; 8-11, the beloved; 12-14, the spouse; 15, the beloved; 16 - ii. 1, the spouse; 2, the beloved; 3 - iii. 5, the spouse; 6-11, the companions probably of the spouse; iv. 1-15, the beloved; 16, the spouse; v. 1, the beloved; 2-8, the spouse; 9, the companions; 10-16, the spouse; v. 1, the companions; 2, 3, the spouse; 4-12, the beloved; vii. 1, the companions say, “Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return that we may look upon thee.” The spouse answers, “What will ye see,” &c.; 2-9, as far as “best wine,” are the words of the beloved. Here the spouse breaks in, “For my beloved,” and continues to viii. 4, when the companions ask, “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?” The spouse answers, “I raised thee up,” &c., and continues to 7; 8, 9, the companions or brethren of the spouse according to some; 10-12, the spouse; 13, the beloved; 14, the spouse.

Some regard ii. 7, iii. 5, viii. 4 as the language of the beloved, but probably without sufficient grounds.

C. E. S.

Chapter 265

The Songs of Degrees

There are fifteen psalms bearing the above title. Unlike other psalms bearing titles similar to one another, these are collected together in one (the 5th) book, forming a little series of themselves. Addressed to none of the chief singers, but simply in some cases bearing the names of their authors David and Solomon, we are left in doubt as to the meaning of their general title, “Song of Solomon of degrees or ascents.” Some have supposed they were sung on fifteen steps at the entrance to the temple, and hence their name. Others consider they were a collection of hymns, sung by the Jews in their periodic journeys to Jerusalem on the occasion of their festivals. By some they are supposed to have cheered the returning remnant in the days of Ezra, as they traversed the country between Babylon and Jerusalem. Another suggestion has been made, that the tone in which they were chanted gave rise to their appellation.

Now, whilst the term degrees or ascents (■■■■■■■) might have reference to any of these conjectures, it may nevertheless be asked, Is the hypothesis on which each explanation is made to rest supported by facts? Were they really sung at such times or in such tones? Was this the reason of their being so designated in the Bible? Have they then fulfilled the purpose for which they were written, or do they not apply to a condition of things yet future? A future, not a past application, will, we believe, alone afford a clue to their special object and name. Since the days of David and Solomon the people have never enjoyed such blessings as these psalms speak of. (See Psa. 121; 128; 132) Before that period of their history, since they first entered Canaan, they had not known the calamities referred to. (Psa. 120; 124) The blessings described are to be permanent, but only to be enjoyed after the people are brought back from their captivity. The meaning, therefore, of the word degrees or ascents will best be sought in connection with the deliverances and blessings therein set forth, instead of in any topical or musical allusions, or supposed reference to Jewish customs. The psalms themselves, we believe, explain their name, describing as they do the condition, political and moral, of the people in the last days, which end in the permanent dwelling of the Lord in their midst. The steps which lead to this are the subjects in hand. Commencing with the returned captives in their land, but with enemies still among them, the series goes on till all enemies pass away as the withered up grass; and the people, having judged themselves before the Lord, have His presence again manifested in Jerusalem; and the long divided nation, now finally united, is blessed by Jehovah out of Zion.

According to the above arrangement Psa. 120-129 are occupied with the political condition of the people, first in trouble and afterward in freedom. Psa. 130; 131 give the moral condition of God's ancient people at this time. Psa. 132 speaks of the Lord's return to Jerusalem, and the two remaining psalms tell of the happiness of unity and the blessing of Jehovah.

Psa. 120-129 “Lying lips and a deceitful tongue” are the troubles afflicting the righteous in the land. To rid himself from these is beyond his power. He knows what such an one deserves and will get: “sharp arrows of a mighty one with coals of broom” (Psa. 120:4), i.e., an abiding fiery judgment; for the ashes of the juniper or broom (as rethem should be translated) are said to retain heat for a

great length of time. “Woe is me,” is his sad complaint, “that I sojourn in Mesech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar!” (Ver. 5.) Long has he dwelt with those who hate peace. To him, a man of peace, that must have been a trial; but he adds what aggravated it, when I speak, they are for war.” (Ver. 7.) Such is his condition, in which he is helpless to deliver or defend himself. Silence before men, and waiting upon God, is the position he must assume. He remits his cause to Him, and as ever: when the righteous does that, good results. “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence shall come my help.” (Psa. 121:1.) Isaiah has sung of the messengers on the mountains bringing good tidings, publishing peace. (Chap. 52:7.) Zechariah has prophesied of the presence of the Lord on Mount Olivet. (Chap. 14:4.) The godly turns his eye to the quarter from whence aid will come, as the besieged strain their eyes for the first glimpse of the delivering force; and knowing for whom he looks, openly declares, “My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.” (Ver. 2.) Jehovah the Creator is the God of his salvation. Could he count on such assistance as this? His very position spoke of national failure, and God's judgment of the people in consequence. Had Israel been faithful, no enemy would have lorded it over them in their land; the head and not the tail they would have always been. (Deut. 28:7-13.) God would assure him of His help: so another speaker is introduced at verse 3. The suffering one had said, “I will lift up mine eyes to the hills;” the speaker in verse 3 addresses him, “He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:” a welcome assurance to the afflicted. Powerful were his foes, wary they might be: so he has here the promise of sure protection from the vigilant Preserver of Israel: “He that keepeth thee will not slumber.” No more captivity, no more sorrows from the guardians of Israel slumbering instead of watching.

(Isa. 56:10.) The appointed time for the fullness of national deliverance draws nigh: “Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” Activity had characterized the enemies of Israel at a former epoch. (Isa. 5:27.) Israel should now experience what it would be to have the Lord active on their behalf. They had cried to Him before, “Awake, why sleepest thou?” (Psa. 44:23:) In former days He had awoke as one out of sleep, and smitten their enemies. (Psa. 78:65.) Now the godly man is assured He will not slumber nor sleep. The cause of His people He will take up, and accomplish their final deliverance; for the keeper of Israel is Jehovah Himself. The hardships they have suffered they shall suffer no more. No evil shall harass them; or threaten their life. Perfect freedom shall they enjoy, and that not for a season but forever. (See Isa. 49:8-10.)

But prosperity in the land is connected with the welfare of Jerusalem and the house of the Lord on Mount Moriah. To this the godly turns. He had rejoiced when men proposed they should go to the house of the Lord. “Our feet,” he adds, “have been standing in thy gates, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that is built as a city which is bound together; whither the tribes went up, the tribes of Jah (a precept to Israel) to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. For there they set thrones of judgment, thrones of the house of David.” Such had been the glory of Jerusalem, the center for worship and center of government. How could they ever forget what she had once been? But how checkered had been her history! The house of the Lord, to which he turned with joy had for ages been destroyed, and its site desecrated to another use. The city too had for centuries ceased to be the center of government. But now their hopes revive, and, with the Lord as their keeper, they can look for peace. Hence the exhortation to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and the earnest desire that it should rest on her forts and her palaces. He was not satisfied with things as they were. Rejoiced to be in the city, he desires her welfare, and those who would prosper must desire it also; for blessing

for all on earth is bound up with the prosperity of Jerusalem, that city so dear to the saints of old, and still to be to the saints in Israel, because it is connected with God's house on earth.

There was need to seek her peace as Psa. 123 shows, for, though the godly had access to the city, the ungodly were still in the land, and the manifested presence of the Lord in the house was still an object of desire. Hence they turn to God, but to God as dwelling in heaven, not as sitting between the cherubim. They wait for Him, and watch His movements. “As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait on the Lord our God, until He have mercy upon us.” And there will be abundant cause for them thus to wait; for their soul will be exceedingly filled with “the scorning of them that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.” Would any condemn such conduct on their part? Does not their past history justify it? Has not the nation been delivered before, when threatened with destruction? Psa. 124 gives the answer. Jehovah had been on their side, when men rose up against them: He had preserved them alive—otherwise the waters of Assyria, the swelling waters, would have overwhelmed them. So Jehovah, their help in time past, is their confidence still. They will trust in the Creator of heaven and earth, and Psa. 125 predicts the sure result. “Those who trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, forever it shall abide.” Stability they shall know, and the guardianship of Jehovah they shall rejoice in for evermore. “For the rod (or scepter) of wickedness shall not rest on the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.” Confident of this, they pray for Jehovah's favor towards the good, predict His dealing with the ungodly, and await peace upon Israel.

With the future thus present to their thoughts, they are drawn out to pray for the accomplishment of these hopes in Psa. 126. When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion, they were like them that dream. The heathen, too, take knowledge of it as the mighty act of Jehovah. “The Lord hath done great things with these.” The people take up the strain and say, “The Lord hath done great things with us, whereof we are glad.” Zion had again become the center for Israel; the people had recovered their existence as a nation with a country and metropolis. Zion's captivity was turned; but they desire full deliverance from the presence and power of the enemy. “Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams (or torrents) in the south,” as a full tide of blessing refreshing the thirsty ground. It was now as it were the sowing time; the abundant harvest would be reaped, when Jehovah had finally taken up the cause of His people. How truly faith is the substantiating of things hoped for! “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy” is the persuasion of their souls; the generation then living would behold, and share in, the blessings God had promised His people. For, if verse 5 might seem to be more general in its bearing, referring to the past and future of the nation, the following verse makes it plain that they expect the consummation of Israel's hopes in their day. “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bearing his sheaves with him.”

Counting on God's word, they have learned to count on Him alone for everything, and now express it; for, whether it be the building the house, or the keeping the city, or the strength and blessing which the children of youth are to their families and country, all is from Jehovah. (Psa. 127) They had learned the vanity of building the house without the Lord's countenance. They had felt their powerlessness to keep the invader out of the city. The house had been laid low (Psa. 74) and the city had been a prey to the enemy. (Psa. 79, Isa. 29, Zech. 14) All extraordinary watchfulness on man's part was only in vain. God would have His people to trust Him, and to learn

this from His bestowal of sleep. “So he giveth his beloved sleep.” This daily blessing was a lesson of it. Besides, if the arm of flesh was needed by which to repel the foe, God could bestow it. “Lo the inheritance of Jehovah (i.e. what He gives) is children, and His reward the fruit of the womb.” For defense or for attack let them rely on what He will provide. “For, as arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of youth.” “They shall not be ashamed, for they shall destroy their enemies in the gate.”

From the building of the house, and keeping the city, and destroying their enemies in the gate, we are led on in the next psalm (128) to the peaceful life of those who fear the Lord. “Happy is (lit. the blessings of) every one fearing Jehovah, who walketh in his ways.” The general statement here made includes all in that day who fear the Lord, not the seed of Israel only, but the stranger who will have a portion in the land. (Ezek. 47:22.) What a picture it presents of the calm, quiet enjoyment of the earthly people! “Thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands; happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.” How often had their fathers sown for others to reap! How often had the enemy invaded the land, and carried off the produce of the soil! (Judg. 6:3, 11.) Their affairs shall prosper, and in their families God's blessing shall he experienced. But this is not such worldly prosperity as may be witnessed now, for it is directly connected with the kingdom established in power on Mount Zion. “The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion; and see thou the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life, yea, see thou thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.”

How naturally the glowing prospect of the future, and the announcement of the coming blessing to Israel, recall the sorrow of the past! (Psa. 129) “Many a time have they afflicted me, from my youth, may Israel now say: many a time have they afflicted me from my youth,” i.e. from the exodus from Egypt under Moses. The Babylonian, the Roman, the Assyrian powers had put forth their might against the people, and laid waste Jerusalem; but the nation will be found to have survived the heaviest blows. And, knowing that the millennial blessing was shortly to be enjoyed, they add, “but they shall not prevail against me.” The marks of God's dealing in government through the instrumentality of their enemies they had borne about with them. Jehovah had dealt righteously in chastising them; He had now acted righteously in cutting the cords of the wicked, and setting His people forever free. The haters of Zion, those opposed to the nation and the kingdom, should be ashamed, and turned backward, and fade away as grass on the roof before one plucks it up. Long had the wicked prospered on earth, and set himself in opposition to the counsels of God. Now the end appears, and the wicked pass away undesired and unblessed.

The outward condition of the people having been thus described till the culminating point of earthly prosperity is reached, the Psalmist turns to depict the moral condition of the remnant at that time. For, since their troubles sprang from their forefathers' unfaithfulness, and they themselves are by nature sinners, there must be a real and true judgment of hearts and ways, ere God could in righteousness restore and finally bless them. In trouble the godly one had cried to Jehovah, and the words of his cry are given in Psa. 130:2-4. “Lord (Adonai), hear my voice, let thine ear be attentive to the voice of my supplication. If thou, Jab, shouldest mark iniquities, Lord (Adonai), who shall stand? Truly with thee there is forgiveness, that thou mayest be feared.” Iniquities acknowledged, and forgiveness desired, he has waited for Jehovah more earnestly than the morning watchers watch for the first dawning of the day, alluding, as it is generally thought, to the priests and Levites on duty in the temple, watching for the moment to offer up the morning burnt offering. But, since the final deliverance will not be individual only but national, all Israel are

exhorted to hope in Jehovah, “for with Jehovah is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.” This is becoming ground for them to stand on, and indicates in those who take it a real work of God in their souls. They cast themselves on God to do according to what He has said. “In his word do I hope” is the simple statement of the godly one. “He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities” is the settled conviction of their souls. “Let them hope in his mercy” is the advice they give to their fellows. “God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.” (Rom. 11:32.) His purpose thus worked out, the time to show that mercy has come.

Grace operates on the hearts of the remnant, to fit them to be recipients of mercy, which their forefathers despised. The next Psalm (131) shows this. With self put on one side, without searching into depths beyond him, David had walked, and the remnant will tread in his steps. Many difficulties might suggest themselves from the dealings of God with them. Unable to solve them, they can trust God to bring them through all their trials. Humble, trusting, weaned from his desires, as a child weaned from its mother, the godly one has walked. For himself and for Israel there is but one path, that of hope in the Lord from this time and for evermore. (Psa. 131)

Brought into their true place morally, no impediment will exist to the blessings being poured out on them. Moses had told them that, when they should return to the Lord in the land of their captivity, the Lord their God would bring them into the land which their fathers possessed. “And thou shalt,” he said, “possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land for good.” (Deut. 30:5, 9.) This is just what they had sung of, anticipating its near fulfillment. But that will only take place when the Lord is dwelling among them. This leads on to Psa. 132, in which we have His entrance into Jerusalem announced, and the gracious declaration that it is His abode for evermore.

And here the ground on which God is addressed is worthy of observation. “For David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.” It is David's trouble, not the affliction of the nation, that is spoken of. “O Jehovah, remember for David [i.e., favorably] all his afflictions” are the first words of it. It was natural that David should thus plead with God. To him God had made promises, As God's anointed he had suffered much. But this language, so suited to him, will suit the remnant likewise. They with their fathers have failed, but God had made promises to David. Where they could not speak of themselves, they could tell of the promises. David had died, but the promises held good: his children had failed, but God's words could not. The mercy to Abraham, the truth to Jacob (Mic. 7:20), the promise to David, the Lord will perform. How gracious of our God, not only to plan, but to promise to His servants, long since departed, what He would do for them and their people, that, when failure has come in (and the only right place for the people is to own it), they should nevertheless be able to lay hold of promises, which, whatever they have been, must be made good to those, who, though dead as regards this world, yet live to God! So this Psalm finds its fitting place here, because, whilst the entry of the ark into Jerusalem under David probably gave rise to its composition, the fulfillment to the remnant of the promises made to David will alone exhaust its meaning. The Lord will dwell in Zion for evermore. We have David's oath about the ark, and the Lord's oath about David's heir. David did provide a tent for the ark, an habitation for the mighty One of Jacob after its captivity by the Philistines. They had heard of the ark at Ephratah, and found it in the fields of the wood, i.e., Kirjathjearim. (1 Sam. 7) The habitation David provided

in Zion was a temporary one, the promise about his seed was to last for evermore. The petitions preferred, the Lord answers, but, as has been often observed, goes beyond the requests of His servant. “Arise into thy rest,” said David. “This is my rest forever,” was the gracious answer. “Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy saints shout for joy,” the prophet had petitioned. “Thy priests,” “thy saints,” he says, speaking to the Lord. “Her priests,” “her saints,” the Lord calls them. Having chosen Zion, all belonging to her shall be blessed. Her poor shall be satisfied with bread, her provisions shall be abundant. How often since David's day has famine visited that city, when besieged by her enemies. Plenty shall be found there, and the poor be satisfied. Her priests shall be clothed, not merely with righteousness, but salvation, and praise be heard in her streets. There, too, the horn of David shall flourish; the nation, the priesthood, the family of David, all shall share in the joy of that day. God has provided that this hope should not fail. “I have established a lamp for mine anointed.” Throughout each night it was the duty of Aaron and his sons to order the lamps of the candlestick. (Ex. 27:21.) Man may fail as the priests did—witness the temple in the days of Ahaz—but God will not. This promise has several times in their past history been referred to, when nothing but God's forbearance and faithfulness could stave off the deserved punishment. When Solomon had sinned (1 Kings 11:36), when Abijah reigned (chap. 15:4), when Jehoram walked in the ways of Ahab, this was declared to be the reason of God's forbearance. (2 Chron. 21:7.) And, since those days, during the long dark night of Israel's rejection and captivity, this promise, yet to be made good, remains in all its force. David shall have a lamp in Jerusalem, the light of the glory of his kingdom shall not be extinguished. And, when the remnant find this Psalm applicable to their condition, they will behold the faithfulness of their God, as they look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn, learning that He is the Christ, the fruit of David's body, who will reign over the people of Israel forever.

With the two following psalms this series closes. What more have they to ask? what petitions have they yet to prefer? The throne of David re-established, the house rebuilt, the Lord returned to Jerusalem, peace and prosperity enjoyed, their enemies subdued, they have only to be satiated with the blessings God will provide, and to bless Him for them.

Since the days of Solomon, Israel and Judah have been separated. By David they were outwardly united. Under David's Son they shall be one in heart, and united forever. (Isa. 11:13; Ezek. 37:22.) The first sense of the happiness of this union forms the subject of Psa. 133 “Behold how good and how pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity! Like the good oil upon the head, that runs down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, which descends to the skirts of his garments. Like the dew of Hermon which descends on the mountains of Zion.” Smoothness and refreshment pervade all. From the highest to the lowest, throughout the whole nation, from the center or head to the most distant part, the blessing is felt. And the center is Zion. “For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life for evermore.”

With this before them, He must be praised, and that by all His servants. And no time can be unseasonable in which to bless Him who thus blesses them. By day and by night His praises should be declared. “Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord.” The hands, so often lifted up in prayer towards God's house, are to be lifted up in praise. When raised in prayer the Lord had answered, He will not be the less mindful when lifted up in praise. “The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.” The Creator now dwells in Zion, and from thence

in connection with the throne can bless His people.

From depths of trouble to heights of blessing the godly will pass. From tribulation to millennial rest they will proceed. They have cried to Jehovah in heaven, they will know Him as present on Zion, and present there for evermore. “Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is Jehovah.”

Chapter 266

The Spirit of Prophecy

One might have thought that prophecy we not the testimony of Jesus, as it was not (like the epistles) to the church about itself from its head. But the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.

Chapter 267

Spiritual Man

It is well for us to consider what marks the spiritual man. First, a spirit of dependence, whatever may be the state of faith and the blessings we may have realized. Secondly, an entire confidence in the goodness of God; for God is love. Thirdly, Christ, the constant object of the affections of the heart (Phil. 1:21), for the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart is to fill it with the thought of Christ.

Chapter 268

Superstition—the Will and Natural Conscience

What is the truth philosophers are following? Where is it? The truth they are following is truth they have not got. What is this truth they are seeking? They do not know: if they knew, they would not be following it.

Chapter 269

The Sympathies of Jesus and His Isolated Position Among Men: Part 1

Lecture on Matt. 3; 4:1-11, followed by an extract from an exhortation

The word of God presents to us this very precious fact, that we do not only find there certain truths and doctrines, but also every relation between God and man fully developed on earth, and each day we can clearly see all these things in the person of Jesus. It is a great mercy of God to have brought Him so near to us, so as to make known to us those relationships in the circumstances in which we are ourselves found. At bottom, the life of Jesus was like ours. He was in all things tempted in like manner as ourselves. It was indeed God manifested in flesh; but it was also life, and the expression of a life perfectly acceptable to God.

In order to make progress in spiritual life, we must study the Lord Jesus; whether in the grace of His person or in the circumstances of His life; or, lastly, in the glorious position He has near the Father, and which we shall by and by share with Him.

We see in Christ, from the beginning, the accomplishment of the life of faith, which was tested in Him, and of which He manifested all the perfection.

Jesus is to us a tender and mighty friend; and, while traveling through the wilderness, we know that at the end of the way will be found the glory in which He now is. That is what is said in Heb. 12:1-3: “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” —rather “the leader and completer of faith.” As captain, He has gone before us; as shepherd, “he putteth forth his own sheep,” and also “goeth before them.” He “despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”

Divine life is seen in that Man who walked in the midst of all difficulties and temptations, who surmounted all, and who, alone amongst all, was not touched by the evil one.

Now He has entered the glory at the right hand of God; and we shall share with Him that glory when He shall appear, since we shall be made like unto Him.

We shall see a little how the Spirit of God presents Jesus to us, at the beginning of His life, when He enters that painful race of faith.

An important thing to remark is, that the light manifests all that is man.

It is true that God saw what was in the heart of Abel and of Cain, before anything of it was manifested; just as He saw a remnant in the midst of the Jews, in whom grace was working; but things were never brought to light under the law. God was, as it were, hidden behind a veil, and He allowed many things because of the hardness of their hearts, as Jesus told His disciples; for the

full light was not yet manifested. But in Christ the light shone in the world.

In the Christian, who possesses the life of Christ, that which is true in Christ, is true in him, as it is said in 1 John 2:8: “Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.”

It is always well to bear in mind that, in the former dispensation, God hid Himself, but that He sent certain messengers who were to reveal what was entrusted to them, but without making God known. The law did not manifest Him fully. It is true it says Thou shalt love; but not I love thee; it does not reveal a God of love. It does not show us what God is, save that He is a just God and executes vengeance. It tells us nothing at all of what God is for man, nor of what He is in Himself. The law did indeed make known to men what they ought to be toward God, but it was silent as to what God is for them. A man is always under law, as long as he is occupied with what God demands from him, instead of understanding what God is for him; for this would produce much more excellent effects. God, being thus hidden, required obedience in order to grant life. It was no question of being able to place oneself in the presence of God. The high priest alone presented himself once every year into the holiest of all; for the way into it was not yet made manifest, and there were many things that God bore with, without approving them. There were ceremonies and ordinances, which were intended to remind man of his dependence, and to bring him into relationship with God, according to certain things which acted upon the flesh, and adapted to the flesh, because man was in it, and God placed Himself in a relationship with him. The holiness of God who was hidden was not seen, but there were ceremonies which maintained the relationships between that God who remained hidden, and man. But when God manifests Himself, it can no longer be so; for God is holy, and He is love. He is perfect in holiness, and man must necessarily enter into relationship with what God is. God can forgive sinners—can wash them; but He cannot bear with anything that does not answer to His holiness. If there is grace, there is also holiness, but God cannot, because of His holiness, bear with man, a sinner, just as he is; for God is “of purer eyes than to behold evil.” Let us meditate upon the example of Jesus, the light upon earth, entirely separated from sinners, which constituted the perfect beauty of His life.

On one hand, we see that He is alone, perfectly alone; He is the most isolated man that one can imagine. The disciples themselves know not how to sympathize with Him. The woman of Samaria, to whom He addressed such touching words, about the water “springing up into everlasting life,” can understand nothing else but “the well is deep.” She says, “From whence then hast thou that living water?” If Jesus says, “Look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest;” if He speaks of “a meat to eat” that His disciples “know not of,” it is ever the same. He meets with no real sympathy in the midst of men. We feel that this was painful to Him, because He had a man's heart, and would have desired to find some one who could understand Him; but He found nothing anywhere. On the contrary, as to Him, we see that He has a perfect sympathy toward all. Jesus was the most accessible man, most within the reach of the simple, of the ignorant, and even of the most degraded of sinners. He manifested in His life something that had not its equal; no, there never was all that holiness and love, which is above all our thoughts.

There is so much selfishness in the heart of man, that the love of God is to him an enigma still more incomprehensible than His holiness. No one understood Jesus, because He manifested God. I do not as yet speak of His work, but of what He was, when He was manifested in the midst

of the world. He had to show that all the ceremonies cannot make God known; for the thing is impossible. Jesus alone manifested God, as He is, and man also, as he is.

No religion, as such, can change man. Man puts on religion as a clothing; but his religion leads him farther away from God.

The first thing God does is to lay us bare in His presence; He takes away everything. He is occupied with us, and not with our religion. Then is all quite removed, and we stand before Him, such as we are. Well! that is what took place when Jesus was here below; and therefore He was unwelcome, and found Himself in conflict with every one.

It is impossible we could like to find ourselves in the presence of God, just as we are. A man accustomed to dirt does not know he is dirty, because his whole way of living is fashioned to it; but if he finds himself in certain circumstances, which give him light as to himself, he will feel disgusted to see what his whole life has been. Such is the heart of man; but when the light of God shines in his conscience and in his soul, be sees himself such as he really is in the sight of God, although there be doubtless some defect in the perception of it. This is very humbling; one does not like it, for it is too painful. Once more I say, before God it is not a question of our religion, but of ourselves.

Such is the necessary effect of the presence of God in the world. The light shows us in God all condescension, all goodness, all grace: and in man a selfishness which betrays itself before God. One sees that man cannot be saved through himself. A certain man says, “Suffer me first to go and bury my father.” Is it not as good as saying, There is something else that holds the first place, when Christ calls me? It is not my will to serve God entirely. “I have bought five yoke of oxen,” says another; and a third, “I have married a wife.” What does this mean? That the heart is fixed on quite another thing; that it prefers its oxen to the feast that God has prepared. Thus all is made manifest, and the heart is laid bare.

All disappears before the testimony of God. Man's self-righteousness and his pride lead him to hide from himself his own state, in order to take advantage of a religion which descends from his ancestors. But John the Baptist said (Matt. 3:7-9), when he saw the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” It is God who works as He pleases, and in His own power, to create children unto Himself. All your pretensions, as Jews, descendants of Abraham, God takes no account of. He works in that supreme power, in which He is able, even of stones, to raise up children unto Abraham; and that is the reason why He takes no account of your righteousness: He must first have sinners.

There is yet another thing to observe here. John says (Matt. 3:11, 12), “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Jesus is going to establish His kingdom, and that will soon come to pass. It is a kingdom in which that which is not according to His heart will be burnt with fire. Such was the testimony of John. “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached.” God

had given the law to that people which He had gathered and ranged round Himself; He had sent prophets who, as witnesses for the moment, called upon the Jews to walk according to the law. John the Baptist came to announce to them quite another thing: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. God is about to establish a new order of things: are you in a state to enter it? Have you energy to penetrate there Judgment is there also. He has His fan in His hand. Have you any fruit? If not, “the ax is laid unto the root of the trees.” “Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.” Thus it was that John taught; such is the place he takes. As to Jerusalem, it is about to be set aside, and John preaches the testimony of repentance and of the kingdom about to be established He presents himself in order to draw out every thought towards Jesus. After having announced the testimony of repentance, the Lord Jesus presents Himself to our hearts and souls. Let us rest—rest our thoughts upon Him, who shows Himself to us personally.

The object of God is not only to cause sin to be felt, although that must take place, but to make Jesus known, and to place the soul in the enjoyment of God Himself—to act in grace towards it in order that it may forget itself, and be filled with the thought of Jesus. This is the way God does it. He presents the Lord “as a root out of a dry ground.” There is in Him no beauty for man, as there was in the temple; nay, nothing of that which attracts the flesh and might tempt it—nothing of all that. It is, on the contrary, a root that none “should desire.” To the eyes of flesh there is absolutely nothing to render Him lovely. Who is it then? It is a poor man who goes preaching! He “hath not where to lay his head.” He is a man condemned by every clerical authority, by all the wise men, and all the Pharisees. The Sadducees condemn Him, the priests condemn Him. Thus was Jesus received. In Him is “no beauty that we should desire him.” It was needful He should present Himself thus, that it might be shown if the heart could discern God, and because He would not supply food to fleshly feeling. He must put the heart to the test, to prove whether God is enough for the heart, and whether the moral beauty that is in God—His love, His holiness, His word that penetrates within the heart; whether, in a word, all that is infinitely precious in the divine nature—can be discerned by man.

When He comes as the light, He never adapts Himself to that which He is going to destroy in the heart; man would do it, and he would call this religion; but it would only be to hide God, or to deny Him. Thus the Lord Jesus presents Himself without anything which could attract man, and that is what we find here. Of course, every testimony of grace and goodness, necessary to our poor heart, is there; but nothing to meet its desires. The testimony given by Jesus was perfect, and placed before the heart the grace it needed, to be rendered capable of tasting the grace of God itself.

Jesus has shown Himself to our faith in all the grace of His divine person; but He took His place among men as being nothing, save as the object of faith.

The angel appears to Joseph in a dream, and says to him: “Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.” (Matt. 1:20, 21.)

It was as Oshea that God caused Joshua to be called, which means Savior, for God had charged him to bring Israel into the land of Canaan. It is God Himself, it is Jehovah, who comes as Savior. It is the first thing that is presented to us: “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” What a

great and precious truth— “God with us!” Then God, so to speak, begins over again with man.

As soon as Jesus appears, Satan seeks to destroy Him. It is astonishing to see how forgetful man is. The magi who came from the east had owned Jesus as King of the Jews, born in Bethlehem; they had borne a testimony to Emmanuel, to the Son of David. The shepherds, after having worshipped, had spread abroad what the angels had told them; and in spite of that Jesus, although approved of God, was disowned and rejected by men.

God begins over again the whole history of Israel in the person of Jesus. He must call His Son out of Egypt, where He had sent Him, because men wanted to slay Him, the moment He had come into this world. Israel was really lost, and God must begin over again all their history in the person of Jesus. Herod seeks the young child to destroy Him. Thus we find that opposition shows itself against Jesus, even from His cradle.

Satan has carnal motives enough to persuade souls to do away with God. His great work is to supply us with motives powerful enough to lead us to do without God, and to shut Him out of our hearts. Here we find the way he begins. He stirs up Herod against Jesus. Then Joseph takes the young child and departs into Egypt. After that, he returns into the land of Israel, and dwells in Nazareth, for it was written, “He shall be called a Nazarene.” This is, in fact, where Jesus begins, in the midst of the world. And who is it who dwells there, in Nazareth? It is Jehovah, the Savior; it is “Emmanuel.” And what is that city? It is so bad a place, that to be found there is enough to make men say, Ah! I will have none of it. Nathanael said to Philip, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?”

(To be continued)

Chapter 270

The Sympathies of Jesus and His Isolated Position Among Men: Part 2

Lecture on Matt. 3; 4:1-11, followed by an extract from an exhortation.

It is God whom I first see in the person of Jesus; but God in the circumstances which the flesh repels, because it is wicked. To know God the flesh must be entirely mortified, and grace, in our hearts, must lead us to value the love of God, in spite of the flesh. This is the history of Christian life.

Outwardly, Jesus was only a poor Nazarene; but perfection was in His ways and in His heart, and it manifested itself in the midst of every difficulty, of all contempt, and of all that was false. Faith alone could discern the ways of Jesus through want and every misery. The broken heart saw this perfection of goodness manifesting itself in the midst of every care. It is necessary our hearts should see also, in that despised man, God Himself, who reveals Himself to our souls, and takes His place in our midst.

Then Jesus comes to John to be baptized. John forbad Him, because he owned the dignity of His person. “I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” Jesus then “said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” Whom do I find here? It is the Lord Jesus and His person owned; but in spite of that, His will is to take His place with the least of the saints. “Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” Who are they, these we? It is John and Himself. Where does He place Himself? He places Himself there, in connection with the first movement of His Spirit in the heart. I place myself with those who repent, said Jesus. There are some who come to be baptized; I also, I come to be baptized. As soon as there is a movement of repentance in the heart of the sinner—a response to the testimony rendered by the word, Jesus takes His place there with that heart. It is not only that He manifests as an object that which, by faith, becomes the crucifying of the flesh, but He goes with the heart also, and the poor heart sees all that; and what a consolation for us! The One in whom the fullness of the Father was manifested is there, and it is the Son Himself. If a soul is broken down—well! Jesus is with it. If it is in fear, because already “the ax is laid unto the root of the trees,” He is there to encourage it and to show unto it His grace. He takes His place with His people, and thus we see the perfect goodness of God. It was He Himself who produced this movement of repentance in that heart, and He takes His place with that soul; Jesus is there. If He is to us the most high God, the One who manifests all this light, He is there also as man, meeting the least of our feelings. He is with us, believers, in all our misery and in all our circumstances.

The consequence of the baptism of Jesus is that the heavens are opened unto Him. It is not only the God incarnate, but heaven is opened over Him; He has the full approbation of God, and thereby we see all the extent of that grace presented to sinners. Never was heaven opened before. God had sent messengers, but never had there been on earth a man upon whom heaven opened.

When Jesus has accomplished the work of atonement, He places us in the same position as Himself. “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God.” Heaven is open. There is no longer any veil on our heart.

As man, Jesus was perfectly righteous, and although He placed Himself in the position of those poor sinners who drew nigh to God, He was none the less acceptable to God; and, indeed, never was Jesus so acceptable to God, as when He bare our sins on the tree. It was at the moment of His death that He perfectly glorified God, in all that He was as man, and that He also, at the same time, bore testimony to the perfect and infinite love of God towards sinners.

Heaven is opened on Jesus—well! it is also entirely opened on us. No sin can be tolerated before God; all that is not of Christ, on whom heaven could be opened God beholds and He cannot tolerate sin. But there is no longer a veil as to us: we look on His glory in Jesus, with unveiled face; and the glory of God shines on man, as he is in Jesus, just as it shone on Jesus Himself. All that is not Christ is condemned. All that is reprobate is manifested by Himself.

There is another consequence of the acceptance of Jesus; it is the Spirit of God, who descended upon Him like a dove, and the voice from heaven, which made itself heard, “saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Such is the position Jesus takes. He manifests His grace in testimony to man when he is in his sins. He adapts Himself to the circumstances of the sinner in his lowest state; He identifies Himself with him in the first step he takes under grace, but at the same time, we see as to Himself that there is a voice “saying, This is my beloved Son.” This is the perfect man, in the presence of God—the friend of poor sinners, and the expression of all that God loves to see in man in the midst of the world.

But, further (Matt. 4), if we are the children of God, His beloved children, as we believe, loved as Jesus is loved (as He said Himself: “That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them"), we are, through grace, in the same position as Himself in the sight of God. But it is needful that this perfectly beloved person should be tested. It is needful that we also should be tested (not merely to know if we are children of God, nor as sinners, as such; we have already been tested, and we know we are lost). It is needful that grace should work, and when it is a question of grace, it is always the perfect grace of God toward sinners. All that is good must be on God's side, for in man there is nothing. The light manifests that in God there is nothing but that which is good, and in us no good thing. This love of God, in us, produces a new life. We are in the position of children of God, like Jesus; but then, the Spirit of God being in us, we must be put to the test. There are many things which hinder us from enjoying the love of God. There is selfishness, self-love, levity: therefore we must be put to the test, as Jesus Himself was. Paul says, “We glory in tribulations also and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.”

Thus we are conscious of being children of God, being looked upon by Him as Jesus Himself. Then, all is begun; but all is not finished. As to acceptance, indeed, all is finished. The child God may have just given me is truly my child, though its education be not gone through; but it is as much my child, though just born, as when he will be twenty.

Jesus, owned of God, takes His place according to our weakness, and He is “led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.” What Satan always seeks is to make us forget our position as children. In ourselves, we are slaves of the devil; but we have been set free by God. Satan wanted man to abandon his first estate which he had in Eden; and he succeeded. There were “angels which kept not their first estate,” neither did Adam keep his. Whatever the position in which man was placed, he always failed. Nadab, Abihu, Solomon, were not able to keep the estate in which they had been placed. Satan always seeks to make us fall. Hence, although God brings into blessing, He brings us also into trial; yet we know that “He who hath begun the good work will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” If Jesus leads His sheep out, “He goeth before them.” Satan rises up to make us fall if he can; but man must, in this world, undergo the temptations of the devil. Well, Christ also underwent them, and in that position He acted as we ought to do ourselves. He does not at first say to Satan, “Get thee hence;” but He places Himself in the same position as ourselves, and he fasts forty days and forty nights. But He is there with Him who said to Him, “This is my beloved Son.” He was conscious of being the Son of God; yet, as man, Satan begins to tempt Him. Do something, he says, inconsistent with your position, something that is not obedience, to please yourself, to satisfy your own will. “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” But Jesus answers him, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

If Jesus had obeyed Satan, as the first Adam did, He would have fallen; but He could not. Grace places Him in all the difficulties in which we may be found ourselves. What is precious for us (it matters little in what circumstances) is that in Jesus we find not only life, but also the maintenance of that life.

I have life, because God gave it to me; but, in a practical sense, if I do not eat I cannot live. (John 6) There is not in our souls one single spiritual quality but what comes from God. And, besides, see how Jesus acts practically. There is not a single word in the book of God which cannot feed our souls, and therefore it is important for us to know how to handle that word by the power of the Holy Ghost, in order to be enabled to keep Satan at a distance. “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.” Satan quotes to Him a promise, but Christ will not abandon the position of obedience, and He answers him “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” We have here a principle of the utmost importance. We have indeed the whole word of God, as a means to gain the victory over Satan; but it is in the most simple obedience that we find strength. If Christ has not a word from God, He does nothing. He came to do the will of His Father; and if that which He is asked to do is not according to that will, He does not act.

The true affection of Martha and Mary leads them to beg of Jesus to come, saying to Him, “He whom thou lovest is sick.” This appeal was very touching; but the Lord does not respond to it immediately: He had received nothing from God, and He does not go. He does not listen to His natural affections. He had indeed healed others that were sick; but if He had healed Lazarus, Martha and Mary would have learned nothing more. Jesus then suffers Lazarus to die, and allows their heart to feel all the bitterness of death, that they may learn that the resurrection and the life are there.

Such is the obedience which is the principle of the life, and not the rule only; and as a Christian, I ought to do nothing but what God wants me to do.

But I find here, besides, another important principle, which is, that I should have in God such perfect confidence that I never need to make a trial of it. It is tempting God not to have the certainty that He loves us. I ought so to reckon on His love and faithfulness as not to need even to think of it.

Again, Satan says to Jesus, “Cast thyself down.” Ah! I need not do it, thought Jesus; I know full well that God will keep me. The Jews said, “Is the Lord amongst us, or not?” Well, in that they tempted Jehovah. We ought to have such assurance in God as to be able to think of nothing else but His will.

As soon as the devil said to Jesus “and worship me,” then it is plainly Satan, and the Lord answers, “Get thee hence Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

The two great principles in which Jesus walked are obedience to the word, without having any will, and perfect confidence in God. We also can reckon upon God, because we are sure to have Him for us.

I would also call your attention to the way in which Jesus placed Himself in our position. We see Him taking His place with sinners who needed repentance, but in the act which was the beginning of the divine life in them, uniting Himself with them in that baptism where their heart responded to the testimony of God about their sins. They were truly the excellent of the earth, those poor publicans and sinners.

Jesus is found in the position of the obedient Son, and thus fulfilling all righteousness. Heaven opens. Is the temptation there? Jesus is found there also. He is everywhere in order to sympathize with sinners. When He presents Himself in this world, it is God Himself who comes, and He shows in Him all that He would put in us. It is a God who has placed Himself in such a position that flesh finds nothing there. One must absolutely learn that it is the heart which must value God in His love, in His holiness, and in the midst of a world entirely lying in the wicked one.

How blessed to have Jesus! He puts Himself in our place; and we have to do with a God who has manifested Himself in the midst of the world, and who would have us for Himself, but without sin. Having put away our sins, He draws us to Himself; but without sin. Having put away our sins, He draws us to Himself, to bring us to enjoy what He is, in spite of every obstacle, and of all that is in the flesh. He would have us to enjoy perfectly that God whom, by His grace, we have known as He is.

May God grant unto us to value the perfect beauty of that Jesus, who came to us! We know Him! Ah! how happy are we to be enabled to say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him!”

May God show us all the perfection of Jesus, and that even in temptations; for we shall find the beauty of One who will not forsake us up to the time He will have placed us in the same glory with Him!

ON John 13:1-38.

It is evident that Jesus here addresses the disciples who then were around Him; but what we see there of Jesus draws the soul to Him. That which draws the sinner, which gives him confidence, is what the Holy Ghost reveals of Jesus.

I desire we should consider what is found in verse 1; that is the constancy of Christ's love—a love that nothing damped nor weakened. If we think what the disciples were, and the world, and the adversaries, we shall find that Jesus had a thousand reasons putting a stop to His love. We see round Him three kinds of persons—the disciples, the indifferent, and the adversaries. The latter are more especially the children of the devil. They are those who, when they saw the Lord was going to take the kingdom and reign over those things, said, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” There are some who, from the bottom of their hearts have the certainty that Jesus is the Christ, and who will not have Him. The adversaries may draw away the indifferent. All that was in this world was of a nature to destroy Jesus' love, had it not been perfect and invariable: for there is nothing that wounds love more than indifference.

We naturally love sin, and we would make use of all that God has given us to satisfy our lusts. Jesus saw all that. He saw the disgusting state of this world and said, “How long shall I....suffer you?” When we are in the light of God, it is thus we judge sin.

Where are the parents who would not desire their children should avoid the corruption they know themselves? It was because Jesus knew the sad state of man that grace led Him to come to take him out of it. God sees everything. In His compassion He takes cognizance of everything in order to meet our wants. But what does He meet with? Indifference of heart. The heart of the natural man sees in Jesus something contemptible. He cannot acknowledge his own state, and he will not be a debtor to God to get out of it. He prefers remaining in indifference with respect to that God who loves him; and, again, let us remember that there is nothing that discourages love more than indifference.

Jesus met with hatred also. All those who loved not the light, because their deeds were evil, hated Jesus. Pride, carnal assurance, self-will, everything in man, repelled God! There was nothing in this uncleanness, this indifference, and this hatred, that could attract the love of Jesus. That love might have been led to give all up when, for instance, Jesus saw that Judas was betraying Him.

If a person were going to betray us, we should be too much occupied with ourselves to think of those who will not betray us. This was not the case with Jesus.

Although iniquity abounded, Jesus spewed all His love; and finally, His disciples themselves forsake Him also! Those who loved Him were so selfish and so much the slaves of the fear of man that it was impossible for Jesus to reckon upon them. Such is the heart of man that, although a man may love Jesus, yet his heart is worthless. Jesus had to love in presence of a hatred which never relented. He loved us even when we were covered with uncleanness, indifferent, full of hatred for the light and having denied it a thousand times. He who knows himself best knows best how true this is. If we were to treat a friend as we treat Jesus, friendship would not last long.

What a contrast we shall find, if we consider how different that which Jesus found on earth is from what He enjoyed in heaven! There He found the Father's love, and in presence of that perfect love, the purity of His own could not be manifested, because it found no obstacle. But here below, remembering what He had left, He loves His own, even in their uncleanness; this itself draws out

upon them His compassion. The object of grace is iniquity and evil. The indifference of His own proved to Jesus all the extent of their misery and the need they had of Him! Even the hatred of man skewed that man was lost. God came to seek man, because he was not in a state to seek God. How many things God has borne with! What indifference, what betraying, what denials! One would be ashamed to act with Satan as one acts with the Lord. Nevertheless, nothing stops Jesus: He loves His own unto the end. He acted according to that which was in His heart, and all the wickedness of man was for Him only the occasion of manifesting His love.

The Lord has done all that is necessary to re-establish the soul in relationship with God. Sinners as we are, the grace of God came to seek us. Righteousness and the law require that evil and the wicked. be removed. John the Baptist required repentance; it was the beginning of grace. But pure grace (far from saying to man, Leave thy state and come to me) comes itself to man in his sin; it enters into relationship with him, that God may be much more manifested, than if there had been no sin.

Grace applies what is in God to the need which is produced by the ruin where we are. Jesus loves unto the end.

What consolation to know that Jesus is all that is needed for all that we are. This places us in that which is true, and leads us to confess the evil which is in us, and not to hide it. Grace alone produces sincerity. (Psa. 32:1, 2.) A man who has a profession to follow wants to appear strong even when he is weak. Grace produces truthfulness—makes us acknowledge the weakness and infirmity in which we are. If we were in the place of Peter, we would do what Peter himself did, if we were not kept. Jesus loves His own “in the world,” in their pilgrimage and their circumstances, in spite of their misery, of their selfishness, and of their weakness. All that Satan could do, and all that was in man, was quite of a nature to hinder Jesus' love: nevertheless, “he loved them unto the end.”

Can you say, “I have a share in that love, in spite of my weakness? I have understood the grace and the manifestation in Jesus of the love of the invisible God.” Have you acknowledged that it was necessary that Jesus should come into the world, in order that your soul might not go to the place where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth?” Have we made up our mind to acknowledge ourselves to be what we are? This is disagreeable to the flesh, it is painful; like the thorn of Paul, it is something that continually tells him, Thou art weak; and that is precisely why God allows it to remain. Is the flesh sufficiently mortified in us for us to be content that Jesus should be all, and ourselves nothing, and for us to rejoice in seeing our weakness, since it is to manifest the strength of God in us?

Jesus has not forgotten any of our wants. The heart which is free from selfishness thinks only of that which love would do. Thus it is that Jesus, on the cross, does not forget His mother, but commends her to the disciple whom He loved.

(Concluded from page 25.)

Chapter 271

The Talmud: Part 1

If the writer of a recent article in the “Quarterly” meant to catch men by a sudden surprise, his friends have reason to congratulate him. High-churchmen have paid homage; low-churchmen, and no-churchmen, down to the most cynical of skeptics, have lavished no ordinary praise. Protests have not been wanting; and these have about them this character damaging to the Review, that they come from persons who know somewhat more of the portentous sea of Jewish tradition than those who have been equally precipitate and lavish with their eulogy. No doubt the mind of man is readily excited by a plausible apology, where evil is skillfully hidden, and what panders to the spirit of man in general, and particularly of the present age, is set forth with no small cleverness. Into this trap people fall the more readily where ignorance has strangely imagined that a vast body of writings, the storehouse of ages on all subjects from the veriest common-place to the most momentous and awful, by men, some of them of mind and feeling, could be without glowing thoughts and bright coruscations of fancy and counsels not wanting in wisdom and prudence. It was also forgotten that these active spirits were seeking to refine on and supplement such materials as no men or ages could have who knew not the scriptures of truth. What then accounts for an acceptance so ready and general among partisans who are usually arrayed in deadly strife?

Doubtless, a variety of causes may operate. First there is the great amount of interest which the writer, by dint of a lively style and allusions to poetry, history, biography, antiquities, jurisprudence, and philology, contrives to cast over a theme insufferably dull in dull hands, but which he knows well enough how to set forth in the best colors and to adorn with worldly taste and judgment from without. Next, there is the national characteristic, this country's love of fair play, especially for that which has been popularly thought good for nothing, which too often disposes the crowd to applaud an able defense of what is really indefensible. Thirdly, the seeming indifferentism but real unbelief of the day disposes a vast number of men, who discuss religion as a science without any renewal of heart or conscience toward God, to hail anything which tends to weaken the uncompromising authority of revealed truth. Witness the avidity with which a pretended pre-Adamite man is caught at, or transmutation of species, or a blank in an old sacred codex, or a faulty reading (provided it differs from what is the received text). But lastly, there is another and if possible graver consideration for those who believe the inspired prophecies. Scripture is plain and positive that the end of this age will see, first, the apostasy, and, then, the manifestation of the man of sin. Christendom will be betrayed far and wide, and the main active agents of this spiritual but infidel declension will be Jewish. Whatever, then, tends, like this article, to bridge over the yawning cavern which severs Christianity (and even yet Christendom) from Judaism, whatever lowers the unutterable value of the New Testament by an illusive exaltation of Rabbinism, prepares the direct way for the lawlessness and lawless one of the latter day—for the amalgam of west and east, of Christendom and Judaism in a universal brotherhood, bound together by the lie to which God will retributively consign those who refused the love of the truth that they might be saved.

It is hardly worth while pointing out the exaggeration of the writer. He puts antithetically against each other the frequent allusions to the Talmud in discussions doctrinal, philological,

archaeological, classical, scientific, legal, &c., and contrasts this universal talk with the universal neglect of the Talmud. But is this fair or fact? There may be, for all that, a sufficient and sure knowledge of the character of the Talmud from those who judge of it chiefly—through Selden or Buxtorf, through Lightfoot or McCaul, through Gratz or Jost, through Frankel or Gfrörer. Prideaux is popular enough, Stehelin and Steinschneider not unknown; and periodicals too have diffused their information. Have all these sympathy with controversialists such as Wagenseil or Eisenmonger? There are perhaps a thousand Greek scholars for one competently versed in Rabbinical literature; yet among the mass of educated men who are tolerably familiar with the Aristotelian syllogistic system, how few have even read the Organon! What would be thought of parading some parish priest who mistook this famous logical collection for an instrument of music? Page 419 breathes more of a scribe's contempt for the unlearned than of good sense, to say no more.

The fact really is that, though students in general may be ignorant of a thousand details as to the printed editions and MSS. of the Talmud (as they are of most works, save a few more about the scriptures), they have had a far truer conception, in our opinion, of the Talmud than this new article, with all its charms, is calculated to impart. And if we know less of the Talmud than of the Koran, whose fault is this? How comes it to pass that the Jews have done so little to furnish a critical edition of their boasted oracle? It cannot be for want of means or literary ability, nor, if the reviewer is to be trusted, for lack of value to almost every province, moral and intellectual, of art, science, literature, laws, and religion. Why has no Rab, Rabbi, or Rabban done for this incomparable treasury what the Reviewer allows has been constantly done for the merest trash in Greek or Latin, Sanscrit or Persian? Why was a critical essay two years ago left off? Why have the two distinct versions of the Talmud brought forth no more than a first volume? To shun the light may have influenced. Lack of sufficient encouragement does not often, in this world, hinder the publication of things good, bad, or indifferent. Even had the Jews been altogether unaided, would it not be strange and humiliating indeed, if this were their true and sole reason why recension and translation have hitherto proved abortive? It is a long while since the blame could be laid at the door of the censor (pp. 420-4); and as to papal denunciation (p. 422), the Talmud only shared with its neighbors. What did popes spare of good or bad unless it served themselves?

It is a curious coincidence, but no more, that the first edition of the Talmud appeared in Venice in 1520 A.D., the same year when Luther burnt the pope's bull at Wittenberg.

Has the Reviewer, then, answered his own question, “What is the Talmud?” Wherefore all this marshalling, if not multiplying, of difficulties (pp. 424 - 430)? Why this mystification of the reader? The desire is evident to fill the imagination with airy notions of its vast depths and wondrous treasures, its ethics, ceremonies, doctrines, physics, metaphysics, medicine, &c. Then he would have us believe that it is fair to compare it with such a work as the Justinian Code! Is this, then, a fair answer to the question which he tells us, “no one has yet satisfactorily answered? Is this the excuse for its prurient indecency? “But the Talmud is more than a Book of Laws. It is a microcosm, embracing, as does the Bible, heaven and earth. It is as if all the prose and the poetry, the science, the faith and speculations of the Old World were, though only in faint reflections, bound up in nuce.” Is this an answer to “What is the Talmud?” An advocate, however zealous, ought to be more careful.

We are next told (p. 426) that the origin of the Talmud is coeval with the return from the Babylonish captivity. The Rabbinical theory is, that the oral law was coeval with the written law, and that both, however differently transmitted, date from Moses at Sinai. And so it is allowed in pp, 430, 431. There seems no reason to doubt that from their return the traditional system grew up. But it is not true that the little company of returned captives were “transformed into a band of Puritans.” The notion of “a fierce and passionate love” thenceforth for the scriptures (if “the scanty records of their faith and history” mean them) is a romance, The prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi disclose with unerring distinctness a wholly different state. Our Lord explains it parabolically but with transparent clearness. “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and finding none.” The unclean spirit of abominations did then disappear; and so they have continued ever since. But as surely as the Jews still continue a Christ-rejecting generation, that spirit of idolatry will overspread and prevail once more, little as they expect such a catastrophe. “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.” Such was its condition after the captivity, such when Jesus was rejected, and such it is still. And therein lies their danger. There is no power of God that has filled the house. There is essentially a negative theology, than which nothing more exposes to Satan. So will it be with Israel. “Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.” (Matt. 12:43-45.)

At any rate, the post-captivity state of the Jews might be more truly called poverty-stricken than Puritan; and it was during this dearth, when the house was “empty” and “swept” that it had the “garnishing” of tradition—the ground-work of the Mishna, which is supposed to have been copied by R. Jehuda about the end of the second or the beginning of the third century. This in its turn gave rise to its “complement,” or comment, the Gemara, of which two remain: that formed by the school of Tiberias, called the Jerusalem Talmud (one vol. folio), as the larger compilation founded by the school of Babylon is published as the Babylonian Talmud (12 vols. folio). It is hard to see why so great a mountain should be constructed out of matters so commonly known by all who take interest in the sons of Israel and their history. Dr. Edersheim has given a popular yet sufficiently exact compendium of all that most persons will care to know of the subject in his “History of the Jewish nation since the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus” (Edinburgh: Constable; London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co., 1856). The reader will find information both abundant and trustworthy in his pleasantly written book (already recommended in these pages) which sacrifices neither the glory of Christ, nor the truth of the Bible, but blends them with real love to the Jews.

The traditional system is either ritualistic or rationalistic, and often both together: so it was among the Jews; and so it is more than ever showing itself in Christendom at this very hour. Hence the moral significance of this paper, and the ominous import of its fitting into the taste and feeling of opposite factions just now.

(To be continued.)

The Talmud: Part 2

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The apologist allows that the process of drawing new precepts from the old may have been too freely applied. “Yet, while the Talmudical Code practically differs from the Mosaic, as much as our Digest will some day differ from the laws of Canute, and as the Justinian Code differs from the Twelve Tables, it cannot be denied that these fundamental laws have in all cases been consulted, carefully and impartially as to their spirit, their letter being but the vessel or outer symbol. The often uncompromising severity of the Pentateuch, especially in the province of the penal law, had certainly become much softened down under the milder influence of the culture of later days.” (p. 432.)

No Christian reader can weigh the spirit of this extract without feeling that it betrays infidelity as regards the Old Testament; and the man that slights the divine authority of the Hebrew scriptures will never be found true to the claims of the New Testament, as will soon be evident in the reviewer. Who but an unbeliever would dare to compare the statutes of Moses (even those relating exclusively to the people and land of Israel) with the laws of Canute or the twelve tables? It is not merely the notion of development into the Talmud (like the civil law of the empire, or the British Digest some day) which is so evil, but the blindness which fails to apprehend the essential difference between the Mosaic institutes, and every other law of every other nation. Was not the law given by Moses God's law?—God's law throughout? Was it so with Canute's? or the twelve tables?

Again, the idea of development, natural in the growth of the human mind and of the collective wisdom of ages, is precisely negatived by the fact of a divine revelation. It is here that ritualists and rationalists find their common point of meeting. They are both of them infidel as to God's word, and in disparagement and dislike of its unswerving authority they sympathize: the one setting up the ever accumulating traditions of men, mainly of the past; the other asserting their own right of free handling in virtue of human progress.

But God's word, whether for Israel in their rudimentary place, or in its fullness of light for the Christian, is itself and refuses admixture. Marvelously adapted by human instruments for man's heart and conscience, it is the revelation of God, as nothing else is. It may be explained, well or ill, but it admits of no development. Its divine perfectness is such, that to add to God's word what is of man is to be found a liar. The teacher may unfold, the exhorter enforce; but the truth is there fully revealed for unfolding and enforcement. The Lord works by those He raises up and sends to minister; but the thing ministered is His own word, the only source and standard of truth.

Of the truth the Church is the responsible keeper, not the teacher but the guardian of it. The Church is taught by instruments given of the Head; the Church never teaches: otherwise development would follow to the denial of a complete revelation from God. The Church is bound to be the pillar and ground of the truth; but it is of truth not latent in the Church or to be evolved by

human skill; it is of truth revealed of God. Hence the written word is the resource for the believer in the perils of the last days, not the Church, nor a teacher, not even the blessed Spirit of God, but scripture, though the Holy Spirit alone makes wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. 3)

To return, however: the believer will not admire the estimate which insinuates the contrast of the mildness of later Judaism with the rigor of the Pentateuch. The truth is, that in divine things the enemy's effort (alas! too successful) is to enfeeble the absolute authority of God's word by every means and at all cost; hence, to bring in changes and shifts, development and tradition, anything rather than what God says—needless ceremonies where God has left liberty; and laxity, more or less, where He demands uncompromising severity. Thus, in result, faithless man, in contempt of the divine revelation which it is his privilege to possess and his responsibility to obey, claims credit for the softening down of old barbarism, especially in the penal law, under the milder influences of the culture of later days. Alas! for poor proud man. Does he not know that as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law? How will the plea of “later days” with their boasted improvements stand in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ the Lord?

It is not necessary here to trace the process of this development of the law in the hands of the scribes. Let us turn to the reviewer's statement of the relation of the Talmud to Christianity.

“Were not the whole of our general views on the difference between Judaism and Christianity greatly confused, people would certainly not be so very much surprised at the striking parallels of dogma and parable, of allegory and proverb, exhibited by the gospel and the Talmudical writings. The New Testament, written, as Lightfoot has it, among Jews, by Jews, for Jews, cannot but speak the language of the times, both as to forms, and, broadly speaking, as to contents (!) There are many more vital (!) points of contact between the New Testament and the Talmud than divines yet seem fully to realize; for such terms as ‘redemption,' ‘baptism,' grace,' ‘faith,' ‘salvation,’ ‘regeneration,’ ‘Son of man,' ‘Son of God,' ‘kingdom of heaven,' were not as we are apt to think, invented by Christianity, but were household words of Talmudical Judaism, to which Christ gave a higher and purer meaning.”

Is it not manifest that it is the reviewer whose notions are both confused and dishonoring to Christianity through his desire to apologize for Rabbinism? He that dooms himself to explore the weary waste of the Talmud will travel far to discover a real parallelism to the gospel in dogma and parable, allegory and proverb, save where drawn unquestionably from the Old Testament. Almost all the terms cited are borrowed directly from the earlier volume of inspiration. The main difference is that the rejection of Jesus by the Jews gave occasion to the Holy Spirit to bring them out in a new and incomparably deeper light, so as to be the form of expressing Christian privilege before “that day” dawn when the old promises in their primary import shall be fulfilled to the restored and repentant people of Israel, then looking on Jehovah-Messiah whom they pierced.

Thus “redemption,” which in the Old Testament is mainly the application of God's power to deliver His people from their foes, is, as characteristically though not exclusively, in the New Testament by the blood of Christ. Take Psa. 14 and Isaiah and compare their connection in the Old Testament with the use made in Rom. 3 In the psalm, the awful picture of the people's sin ends with the desire that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion, and the anticipation of their joy when Jehovah brings back the captives. In the prophecy, a similar picture of their moral ruin closes

with the distinct prediction that the Redeemer shall come to Zion. In both it is redemption by power. But if we examine what follows the citation of these scriptures by the apostle Paul, it is plainly God's gratuitous justification by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. But how? Is it His coming in power and glory to deliver? Nay; “whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.”

Similarly we might trace how each of the terms quoted is transfigured when seen on the holy mount with Jesus in their midst, as compared with their use in that vast collection of mummies, the Talmud. Founded on the Old Testament, if not directly borrowed from it, the Rabbis degraded what the inspiring Spirit of the New Testament transformed with vivifying power and made them to be, as Christ said, spirit and life. Even the advocate of the Talmud is compelled to own the power of His name in this respect. What was ■γ■πη in the dialect of Attica before the Holy Ghost made it to be the chosen expression of such love as was seen in Christ, and described in 1 Cor. 13 or 1 John 4? It is the truth conveyed which is the real matter, and not the words as employed by Greeks or Jews. Who ever used them as they are used in the New Testament?

We are next told that “no less loud and bitter in the Talmud are the protests against ‘lip-serving,' against ‘making the law a burden to the people,' against ‘laws that stand on hairs,' against priests and Pharisees! The fundamental mysteries of the new faith are matters totally apart; but the ethics in both are, in their broad outlines, identical. That grand dictum, ‘Do unto others as thou wouldst be done by,' against which Kant declared himself energetically from a philosophical point of view, is quoted by Hillel, the president, at whose death Jesus was ten years of age, not as anything new, but as an old and well-known dictum that ‘comprised the whole law.' The most monstrous mistake has ever been our mixing up, in the first instance, single individuals, or classes, with a whole people; and next, our confounding the Judaism of the time of Christ with that of the time of the wilderness, of the Judges, or even of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Judaism of the time of Christ (to which that of our days, owing principally to the Talmud, stands very near) and that of the Pentateuch are as like each other as our England is like that of William Rufus, or the Greece of Plato that of the Argonauts.” (pp. 437, 438.)

Can anything exceed the calm unbelief of such sentiments as these? the constant glorifying of man and his progress? the solemn fact, along with this and not very consistent with it, but most true, that the Judaism of to-day morally identifies itself with the Judaism of the time of Christ? The believer at once feels how fatal is the confession; for the rejection of Jesus demonstrates that “that generation” thereby manifested to the full their hatred of the Father and the Son, as His own lips of grace and truth laid to their charge. (John 15) Nothing more certain! But in an organ which, though said to be at present edited by an Independent, is the staunch support of the established religion, and boasts of articles by Anglican bishops, professors of divinity, and other eminent functionaries, who could have expected that a paper should be received, approved, and applauded, which dares to single out for a favorite stage of progress and attainment, singularly like the state of our day (the usual theme of vaunting to the human mind), the age which crucified the Lord Jesus, and sealed its guilt in blaspheming the Spirit's testimony to the suffering but exalted Son of man? Had he owned that the Jewish nation (save the remnant that received Jesus and so escaped) became then, through their unbelief and God's judgment of it, a pillar of salt, and that the Talmud has largely contributed to perpetuate to this hour so awful a monument of sin and shame, it had been nearer the truth.

That there are in the Talmud beautiful moral apothegms of right and wrong borrowed from Moses, no man who values and upholds the honor of God's law could or would deny. But it is utterly false that the New Testament does not go far beyond, not the Talmud only, or any other code of religious tradition, but even the inspired Old Testament. The presence of a divine Person, a man, on earth among us was in itself the introduction of what was necessarily new and beyond all past experience: still deeper was the change for others in virtue of the mighty work of redemption He wrought on the cross, made known and made good in the faith of those who since then are born of God, by the operation of that other Paraclete, the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Thus, what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The very ground of proper Christian holiness was unknown before the death and resurrection of Jesus; and the power was wanting till the Spirit of promise was given. Hence, in Old Testament times, however we may delight in ways of faith, and love, and obedience (which far transcend mere power, be it what it may), no saint before Christ did or could count himself dead to sin and alive unto God, as every real Christian is privileged and exhorted to do. None then could take the place of a worshipper once purged and having no more conscience of sins; none was called as we are to imitate God as dear children and walk in love as Christ loved us. How incalculably this distances loving one's neighbor as oneself, good and right as this was! Christ is the measure as well as pattern now for the Christian, not self.

This suffices to show how entirely the reviewer overlooks the real character of Christianity as well as the awful condition both of the Jews that crucified Jesus and of the Judaism of our day that is confessed, through the Talmud's influence, to resemble it strongly. “The misconception (we are assured) as if a God of vengeance had suddenly succeeded a God of love, cannot be too often protested against. ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' is a precept of the Old Testament, as Christ Himself taught His disciples.” No Christian doubts that God is and has always been both love and light, as Scripture speaks; but government by a law, however righteous (and this unquestionably was the principle of His dealings in Israel), is as different from His display of grace in Christ, as earth is from heaven. It is a just demand that man should not steal, murder, or covet; but what is the law that justifies the ungodly through the faith of Jesus? which quickens those dead in sins, raises them up, and seats them in heavenly places in Christ? Certainly it is the one and only true God; but it is God now, not merely dealing with the propensities of the first man, but blessing in His mercy the merest sinners because of redemption in Christ, the Second Man. It was not by the law, but by the grace of God, that the Savior tasted death for every man.

Even this reviewer owns that the “law was developed to a marvelously and perhaps [!] oppressively minute pitch,” though he is bold enough to say “only as a regulation of outward actions.” What will the Christian reader think when he next hears that “the faith of the heart” —the dogma prominently dwelt upon by Paul—was a thing which stood much higher with the Pharisees than this outward law?” Was Paul then in error? or the Lord Jesus? Is the Christian who reads Matt. 3; 9:12; 15:23, to believe these scriptures? or should he take the reviewer's word that the wholesale denunciations of scribes and Pharisees have been greatly misunderstood? “There can be absolutely no question on this point, that there were among the genuine Pharisees the most patriotic, the most noble-minded, the most advanced leaders of the party of progress.” It would

have been more to the point if he could have affirmed with truth that they bowed to God in a just estimate of their sinfulness and fled for refuge to that only name given under heaven whereby we must be saved. Christianity does not deny many and excellent qualities in Pharisees. Mark 10 lets us know how Jesus beheld with love the rich young ruler who had a good conscience as to the law, but turned away in sorrow from Jesus who claimed a self-renunciation and a following of Himself in His path of suffering and shame, which nothing but the mighty power of God's grace can give any soul to take and keep. Does the reviewer believe the Lord's declaration that the tax-gatherers and harlots go into the kingdom of God before those most patriotic, noble-minded, advanced leaders he admires? What is the good of a “party of progress” which deceives the soul in this world and turns you into a deadlier rebel against God's kingdom than the most despised of men and dissolute of women?

Alas! it is evident where the heart is from the sentence that follows: “The development of the law itself was nothing in their hands but a means to keep the spirit as opposed to the word—the outward frame—in full life and flame, and to vindicate for each time its own right to interpret the temporal ordinances according to its own necessities and acquirements.” A more dangerous and delusive fancy there cannot be. There never breathed the man who walked and taught in the spirit of God's will as Jesus did; yet none ever honored as Jesus the word of God. And Jesus branded the scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem with setting aside the command of God because of such traditions as fill the Mishnah. They were not temporal ordinances, but injunctions of God, which the Judaism of Christ's age annulled, from no necessity whatever save the licentious will and pride of man. No time, no man, has a right to weaken the authority of God's word. This is no question of “black sheep” among the Pharisees, but of the principle of human tradition which made them all a party of declension from scripture. The Talmud must inveigh against its own existence if it upheld divine revelation against the traditions of men.

(To be continued)

The Talmud: Part 3

The reader will have noticed the indifference already betrayed by our reviewer, as by worldly men in general, for the mysteries of Christianity as compared with its morals. It would be too gross to deny the practical fruits which the faith of Christ has manifested in the face of the narrow selfishness of the synagogue and the bolder impurity of heathenism. Two methods of neutralizing the weight of such a testimony are usually adopted by the enemies of the gospel: one the divorce of Christian morals from the revealed dogmas; the other, the insinuation that as good morality was taught by Jews—that the New Testament and the Talmud are therefore well-nigh identical in what affects life and godliness. Indeed in one place at least (cited before) the writer's zeal carries him so far as to speak of “the striking parallels of dogma and parable, of allegory and proverb, exhibited by the gospel and the Talmudical writings.... There are many more vital points of contrast between the New Testament and the Talmud than divines yet seem fully to realize.” We have seen how unfounded are his instances in proof of this intrepid assertion, and that the use of “redemption,” “baptism,” “grace,” “faith,” “salvation,” &c., if more thoroughly looked into, point to a conclusion precisely the reverse of this superficial estimate. It would rather go to prove that, while the inspired writers of the New Testament were led in God's wisdom to employ the Hellenistic dialect and phraseology, already familiar to Jews in their widely used Greek version of the Hebrew scriptures, they employed some terms, common to them and the compilers of the Talmud, in senses as contrasted as the scope of the Talmud is with that of the New Testament. They differ as time and the earth that now is differ from eternity—as far as man does from the God of grace and holiness.

Christianity essentially consists in the revelation of a divine person, who was man withal as truly as He was God, and who, suffering on the cross, wrought the mighty work of redemption. This alone conciliates perfect light with perfect love, a sin-hating and a sinner-pitying God who deigns out of His own pure grace to save guilty man by faith, and yet so as not only to justify, but to glorify his own character in the very righteousness which justifies the believer. This (though not this only) is revealed in the New Testament. It is not the law merely but the truth; and the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven is the power both of enjoying and of testifying this admirable display of our God and Father in Christ the Lord. The Old Testament prepared the way for this new thing which was to fill up the interval between God's rejection of the earthly people Israel till they repent and own the Messiah whom they rejected, and then the old hopes of the chosen nation (sown in a generation to come born of God) shall revive, and Israel shall come forward, under Messiah and the new covenant, and inherit the land long promised to their fathers, and thus shall they be a blessing to all families of the earth, instead of a curse, as their unbelief has proved far and wide to Gentiles for eighteen centuries at least.

It must be evident, therefore, that it is folly as well as wickedness, to sever the ethics of Christianity from its fundamental mysteries. To attempt it is to seek to cut off the head from its body. It is nothing but mutilation and death. It is false that the distinctive Christian truths “are matters wholly apart.” The morals of a Christian cannot be found, save with the faith and confession of the Lord Jesus. For though the δικα■ωμα or righteous import of the law is only fulfilled in him who is not

under the law and who walks after the Spirit, not after the flesh, it is not true that the fullness of Christian morality is contained even in that. Love is the fulfilling of the law; but nowhere is it said or meant that love, as revealed in Christ and made good in the Christian, does not now go far beyond. “If,” says the great apostle of circumcision, “when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable [not merely righteousness, but grace] with God, for even hereunto were ye called [“ ye” Christians, not Jews]; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously,” &c. Christ is life as well as truth, and these things are inseparable in fact, though in thought they may he distinguished. He was the manifestation of what God is toward sinners as well as His own children in an evil world. The law, and beyond this no Jew can go, is but the claim of what man should be. Christ, not the law, is the image of God, and the exemplar of the Christian who is called to imitate God and walk in love as Christ did, who loved and gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. The law can but condemn and kill the guilty. In Christianity God commends His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. From faith in this, and more than this, in His infinite death and resurrection, flows the morality of the gospel. What has Hillel or any other comparable? They cannot rise above self and man. The ethics of the Christian have their source in union with a Christ who died and rose, and is now on the throne of God—in God Himself thus manifesting Himself in Him. Are they then “totally apart from” the mysteries of the Christian faith? Are they, in form or substance, in breadth or depth, identical with the sayings of any Rabbi that ever breathed?

The reviewer protests against the notion that the Jewish sabbath savors of grim austerity. It was (says he) a feast day, honored by fine garments, by the best cheer, by wine, lights, spices, and other joys of pre-eminently bodily import. Does this illustrate the parallel between the morals of the Gospel and of the Talmud? Entirely is it granted that the Puritans are no more to be trusted as expositors of law and gospel than they of the broad-church school, who take advantage of the New-Testament doctrine as to the sabbath, in order to deny the divinely sanctioned character of the Lord's day, mistaking their own license for Christian liberty. In truth the essential distinctness of the two days illustrate well the difference between (not merely the corrupted Judaism of the Talmud, but) the Mosaic institution in its best estate, and Christianity. “The sabbath was made for man,” especially for Israel when that people was called and formed. It was the last day of the week, when man having toiled six days ended with the seventh as a solemn and beneficent sign, the present benefits of which the Israelite shared not only with the stranger but with the dumb brutes that served him. But the Christian begins with his first day—his, did I say? It is rather the Lord's day, but given to them that know and love Him, the day of new creation and of grace on which His Savior and Lord rose from the grave to which man, and pre-eminently the Jew had consigned Him before and throughout that fatal sabbath, which was “an high day,” in their guilty infatuation. Thus Christians enter on each week of their pilgrimage here below with songs of resurrection, that the first day may shed its heavenly light on each day that succeeds, and govern the conscience and cheer the heart of those who through much tribulation must enter into the kingdom of God. And fully am I persuaded that the last or seventh day will be for Israel a day of joys and of import far higher than those bodily delights with which they now essay to cheer themselves in their protracted exile from the “pleasant land.” I say not that God will not vouchsafe them, then and there, joys of an earthly and natural kind; for God means to vindicate Himself from

the old libel of His enemy, and will yet bless this earth delivered from every vestige of the curse, with that exception indeed which but proves the rule and keeps up the witness that its deliverance will be of His mere mercy, after all had been lost by sin and Satan.

And when that bright day dawns on this world, will not the Jew be there? Assuredly he will; and in the highest seats here below, when God will delight to pour out His blessing bountifully on every creature of His hand then living, but holding fast His order, that Israel shall be the head and the Gentiles the tail. Not His people only, but all nations shall then bless Him with one accord and add their cordial Amen. Above in the heavenly places will the world then behold the Church of God that is now (since redemption and the descent of the Holy Ghost) being called out to the confession of the Crucified, the sharer of glory with Christ on high, Head of the Church, King of Israel, and Son of man, whom all people, nations, and languages shall serve as long as the earth endures. For God has made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself for the dispensation of the fullness of times; namely, to head up all things in the Christ, those in the heavens and those on the earth—in Him in whom we have also obtained an inheritance. But as we then shall be glorified above, joint-heirs with Him as His bride, so Israel shall be the inner circle of blessing, His inheritance here below, and the nations that are spared, blessed according to His goodness and sovereign will each in its due place. Alas! poor Israel is toiling for rest as yet, but the true sabbath will surely come at the end. The Christian has entered intelligently on his blessing by faith; at least it is his deep shame if it be not so. Christianity supposes that for us the Deliverer is come and has finished the work by which our sins are blotted out on the confession of His name; but that He has gone on high, having made atonement. There the Christian follows Christ in faith; for the Holy Spirit meanwhile has come down to be the witness of accomplished redemption and the earnest of the glory we shall have with Christ where He is. But Israel must wait without until He, the great High Priest, comes forth; and then shall they, astonished and afflicted but delivered, learn that He is none other than the Nazarene. “They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son.” (Zech. 12) They shall find in Jesus thus seen their sacrifice as well as their Savior, their Priest, Prophet, King, yea Jehovah the God of Israel.

Thus truly read, the Sabbath and the Lord's day are strikingly distinctive, and each of them a sign and pledge of blessing respectively for Israel and man, and for the Christian. On his portion the Christian enters at once by faith, possessing all things, yet having nothing in appearance of what he knows to be his in and with Christ, till He comes again. It is for him the first day of the week, and in this light he is called to walk now. But the Jew awaits the last day for his blessing when Jesus shall appear to his salvation; though not without tears of bitter sorrow, joy will come in that cloudless morning. Eternal praise to Him who has already done such things for us though known now only to faith, for they are unseen! Eternal praise to Him who, in the day when we shall appear with Him in glory, will make Israel glad in His salvation, and swallow up the face of the covering that covers all people and the vail that is spread over all nations!

From such hopes in both Testaments it is a descent to take up the account of Hillel and Akiba striving unsuccessfully to arrange the oral traditions of the Rabbis, or of the equivocal success of Jehnda “the saint,” who is said to have reduced them, though still unwritten, to one code about A. D. 200.

But it is in vain to justify the reign of tradition which superseded the Mosaic law by the fact that Magna Charta is not the general appeal in English law courts of the day. (p. 443.) Rather does it evince the unbelief that everywhere lies under, and often on, the surface of this paper. The law given by Moses was the law of Jehovah: has Magna Charta to boast of such an origin or character? Alas! so far gone is the Jew that the Christian has to remind him of his own singular and exceeding privileges. “For what nation is so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things, that we call on him for? And what nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?” The writer excludes God from the case and evidently sees a progress from barbarism to civilization in the appeal of modern Jews to the Mischnah, rather than the Pentateuch.

There is nothing to surprise in the absence of hell from the Mischnah. Even the Old Testament treats of the eternal scene in good or evil but dimly. Light and incorruption were brought to light by the gospel as the apostle expressly tells us in 2 Tim. 1, and as is evident in fact. God acted on the souls of the fathers by promises. His dealings with the children of Israel were in view of present government in the world, though passages in Job, the Psalms, and the Prophets went farther, till Christ came telling all things, and the Holy Spirit was sent to guide the apostles into all the truth. Now it is not temporal judgments which are executed or spoken of, but wrath is revealed from heaven, no less than God's righteousness in the gospel. If it be merely a question of dealing with wrongs, death closes all questions.

On the other hand, to make the highest virtue lie in study of the law, if thereby be meant the oral tradition that overlaid it, is the proof of the degradation to which the holy nation was reduced. For such an exaggerated value attached to Rabbinic micrology one must look to the scholastic disputes of the dark ages, or the place assigned to Chinese literature in later times, to find a counterpart.

Further on, I may show how far there is room for boasting of the “humane, almost refined, penal legislation of the Talmud.” Once they had God in their midst judicially enthroned, and the Lex Talionis was no dead letter of the law. Him they had lost; and if Sadducees would retain the letter when the spirit was there no more, the Pharisees, who were covetous, were content to make bodily injuries redeemable by money. Both were insensible to their dismal loss, and I can see no ground for congratulating one party more than another. (pp. 444-6.) But the serious thing to note is the constant undisguised preference of man to God, as is plain in the following extract: “Practically, capital punishment was abrogated even before the Romans had taken it out of the hands of the Sanhedrim. Here again the humanizing influence of the traditions' had been at work, commuting the severe Mosaic Code.” (p. 448.) A similar process goes on now among men who have no respect for God's word nor sense of the responsibility of those who bear the sword in civil government. (Gen. 9, Rom. 13) In their eyes it would seem that the blood of a murderer has more price than that of his victim; and God's vindication in the matter is the last thing in their thoughts. The Christian, I need scarce add, who knows his calling on high, is outside such questions; but it is a serious one for those it concerns.

(Continued from page 38)

(To be continued.)

The Talmud: Part 4

The reviewer next sketches the growth of the vast mass of discussion and exegesis, which followed the collection of the Mishnah, and much of which afterward entered the Talmud, as the Gemara or commentary on that text: and this in a double form—the Palestinian in East Aramean toward the end of the fourth century, the Babylonian in West Aram—all which was not closed till about the beginning of the sixth century. But it is natural to tradition to add interminably; and so the Talmud in its turn led to new comments.

Two elements enter here (p. 451) into the apology: first, an apparent measure of shame with the desire to save the Jews from being absolutely tied to the Talmud; secondly, an effort to account by an extraneous cause for the plain fact that nothing else can compete with its authority as regulating the Jews in law and religion. “Only this much we will add, that the Talmud, as such, was never formally accepted by the nation by either General or Special Council. Its legal decisions, as derived from the highest authorities, certainly formed the basis of the religious law, the norm of all future decisions; as undoubtedly the Talmud is the most trustworthy canon of Jewish tradition. But its popularity is much more due to an extraneous cause. During the persecutions against the Jews in the Persian empire, under Jesdegerd II., Firuz, and Kobad, the schools were closed for about eighty years. The living development of the law being stopped, the book obtained a supreme authority, such as had probably never been dreamed of by its author.”

Alas! man knows himself no more than he knows God. The nation did formally and universally accept the law of God before it was written, and, as their first recorded act after it was heard, broke it in its most fundamental precept, by making and worshipping the golden calf, before Moses carried it down from the mount written by the finger of God. They were thus ruined in principle at the starting point of their history; for assuredly to proclaim their idol worship a feast to Jehovah did not mend matters. The longsuffering patience of God was most admirable and instructive: though not without solemn judgments on evil, how full of pledges of blessing both in the wilderness and in the land for those who had eyes to see and ears to hear! But for the mass all was vain; and this is so true that, when Amos announced the captivity that was slowly but surely approaching, he let them know that divine judgment takes account of the first sin, though it may wait till the last degree of insult against God makes patience itself no longer tolerable. “Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chitin your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is The God of hosts.” (Amos 5:25-27.)

After their political ruin and with increasing force as they felt themselves shorn of the witnesses of their ancient power and glory, grew up the Rabbinic system. Extraneous circumstances no doubt helped it on, when it became instinctively and more than ever the idol of the scattered people. No formal assent was needed; no general or special council gives effect to that which commands the evil heart of unbelief. To be credulous where man speaks goes along with lack of faith in God—to

slight His law or revere the Talmud, as of old to lead Jesus from Caiaphas to the Pretorium while not entering themselves that they might eat the passover undefiled!—such is man, such the Jew. “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which skewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.” (Acts 7:51-53.) May we profit by the solemn lesson! Having the selfsame nature, though (thank God) not this only, we are exposed to similar danger; and Christendom is the humiliating proof how soon and far and wide it has carried souls away. Nor is any time, condition, or character exempt from the snare. Nothing delivers from it but absolute submission to God and the word of His grace, and this in liberty of heart by the power of the Spirit.

The reviewer ingeniously tries to palliate the Haggadistic or legendary part of the Talmud, as poetry,” a thing beloved by women and children and by those still and pensive minds which delight in flowers and in the song of wild birds. The ‘Authorities' themselves often enough set their faces against it, repudiated and explained it away. But the people clung to it, and in course of time gave to it and it alone the encyclopaedic name of Midrash.” Will this plea stand? were not the ‘Authorities' the authors and compilers and editors of the Haggadah? Did not the writer know that the Talmud itself (chag. 14) applies Isa. 3:1 to this question, comparing the Halacha to bread and the Haggadah to water, because the latter was even more frequently required, and refreshed more than the former? Their explaining it away is no more than they continually do to scripture: is this too “poetry,” a thing beloved by women and children, &c.? It is a perilous task to extenuate man's word, which invariably, though unintentionally and unconsciously, supplants the revelation of God. Scripture became a mere point d'appui, as is notorious for the Halacha and the Haggadah alike. Nor is it correct to say that the authority silently vested in the Talmud belongs exclusively to its legal or Halachistic portion. The Rabbins feigned that God Himself prosecuted their legendary investigations and decided according to their legal determinations. Difference of interpretation only gave occasion to wit; for it was accepted by the sages that diverse comments might legitimately belong to the same text, and one be as right as the other. A wild mysticism was the result, erroneous metaphysics, and absurd physics, false history, and ridiculous geography, heathen myths and spurious morals, by dint of allegorizing the letter and literalizing the figure of scripture. Not the fancy of women and children, but the famous R. Gamaliel framed thirty-two exegetical canons for the Haggadah.

The reader may well be spared the detail, as well as the special pleading, in the review from pp. 452 to 455.

Coming to views of creation, we are told that the gradual development of the Cosmos is fully recognized by the Talmud, which assumes “destruction after destruction, stage after stage.” We need not travel beyond the inspired record for three patent facts of great and manifest importance: 1st, the original creation (Gen. 1:1); 2ndly, the chaos to which, somehow, the earth was reduced (ib., 2); and 3rdly, the various stages of formation that succeeded when man was to be morally tried. (ib., 3, et seq.) Of “destruction after destruction” the passage does not speak, of a chaos after original creation, it does. There may have been of course a variety of intervening changes; but scripture is silent here at least. It hastens to its great aim—the moral displays of God and man, and hence dwells far more on putting the universe in order for man's dwelling on the earth and

God's ways with him. The notion of God destroying former worlds because they did not please Him, and saying ‘This pleases me,' when He made the Adamic earth, is worthy of the Talmud. It is to count God such an one as ourselves. He was wise in all. This scene, with everything He had made, is pronounced very good; and the rather as man was about to fall under the power of evil and to drag down the subject creation in its fall.

The Haggadistic view of God's providence was quite as unworthy. God clothed or unclothed Himself, wore phylacteries, armor, &c. He did not concern Himself with man's affairs, but left the nations to the rule of this star or that. Israel was the theater of His concern. He spent in study three out of the twelve hours of the day, three in exercising mercy to the world, three in providing food for it, and three in amusing Himself with Leviathan, save indeed that since the Romans destroyed Jerusalem there was no more amusement above, and these three hours were devoted to instructing such as had died in infancy. With three exceptions (life-giving, rain, and raising the dead) God as chief Rabbi conferred with His angelic Sanhedrim, which in cases of dispute consulted the sages on earth. May the Lord pardon one's recounting such profane absurdities!

The Persian philosophy left its traces on the Talmud, as did the reveries of the Greek cosmogonists, and there is much in common with the Gnostics who troubled and corrupted early Christians, especially as to angels and demons. It is hardly necessary to say that Rabbinism denies a Mediator between God and man (p. 457). Credulous as to that which even if true could not profit, they believe not the truth which alone can purify the heart by faith. They were only consistent in opposing divine revelation, old or new: they gave up the Divine unity for idols; they refused the incarnate Word, their own Messiah, and only Mediator, but loved fables about Samael, and Naama, and Lilith, and Asmodi, which could only do harm to women and children, and turn still and pensive minds to dreams of some things worse than flowers and the song of wild birds.

Their notion that miracles were beings created before the seventh day, and among them the art of writing, must be left to the reflections of every sober mind. In a miracle the laws of nature, as they are called, are not changed, but the divine will which formed them is pleased to operate sovereignly. Nor is a miracle, as others say, a more general law, but the action of God's will and power in some given way without suspending the laws of nature outside the particular case. Lazarus is raised, Bartimaeus sees, a leper is instantaneously cleansed. They are the objects of miraculous intervention; they are withdrawn from their previous condition—from the law of death, blindness, leprosy if you will; but the law itself is not changed. Infidelity here, as everywhere, is simply an exclusion of God from man on earth—at least of God as a real living One acting as He will though ever in view of adequate moral ends. A God Epicurean, or Stoic, may be the representation of the Koran or the Talmud, but assuredly is not the God of the Bible in any of its parts. Pantheism characterizes their immutable laws of nature, as well as their psychology. So the punishment of sin is made temporary, even Satan himself being saved at last. The Sohar (M. Ex. 85) even taught that the Messiah in Paradise (!) took and bore the sins of Israel. But they took care to deny the two capital truths which Christianity insists on as bound up with Christ's person—the descent of God to earth, and the ascension of man to heaven. How intent is man on denying what most of all displays and exalts the moral glory of God, though to his own eternal ruin.

(Continued from page 59.)

Chapter 275

The Times of Daniel and the Christian Hope

We are all more or less ignorant, as well as liable to error; but an interpretation of prophecy, which may be quite mistaken, ought not to drift one into slighting our Lord's solemn warning (Matt. 24:48) and giving up a sweet and weighty Christian duty, urged not only in Luke 12 but to the end of the New Testament—the duty of continually waiting for the Savior from heaven, not knowing how soon He may come.

Those who applied the little horn of Dan. 7 to the papacy of course understood the “time, times, and half a time” (three and a half years) of 1260 days= years. Dating this, as many did and some still do, from the epoch of Justinian's Code and Decretal Epistle to the Pope (say, A.D. 533), they regarded the era of the French Revolution as the close. Feeling, however, that the blow then inflicted on the Pope, serious as it was, fell far short of the awful and remediless destruction predicted in scripture, they bethought themselves of the double commencement and ending of the 70 years' trouble on Jerusalem (Jer. 25:11, 12; Zech. 1:12), and contended, along with the earlier date, for a second accomplishment from Phocas' Decree, A.D. 606 or 607, which would make the later line of 1260 years close last year or the year before, when certainly it is hard to say any judgment fell on the papacy answering to the prophecy.

Hence there has been an evident desire, on the part of the historical interpreters to cover their difficulty by bringing in the overlapping 75 days of Dan. 12:12.

Nor is this all. The study of Ezek. 36-39 and Zech. 12; 14 is recommended, whence it is inferred.

First. That our Lord's coming is not to be till after Israel's restoration to their own land; and this as unconverted men—

Secondly. That there will be time enough for them to grow highly prosperous in their land before the attack of Gog, who will be defeated by divine interposition—the personal advent of Christ, attended by the conversion of Israel.

This is assumed to be the incontrovertible meaning of the prophets, and to prove that the Lord's coming cannot be very nigh, since not even the first step of this chain has been passed. Further, it is argued that this long delay is not inconsistent with the accuracy of the chronology which has already closed with the 1260 years: first, because none can say how long the seventh vial is being poured out; and, secondly, because the 75 days more of Daniel may intimate some long continuance of woes before the final blessedness.

All this is humbling and grievous. If we knew not the blinding effect of tradition and a human system in leading people to call bitter sweet and sweet bitter, it would be inexplicable in believers. It is the ruinous effect on the constant looking for Christ which induces me to notice the statements.

Now what warrant is there for supposing the little horn to have power beyond the 1260 days of his permitted blasphemous pretension? Other beasts had their lives prolonged after their supremacy

had ceased (as we know was the fact in Babylon, Persia, and Greece); but the fourth or Roman beast perishes in every sense by divine intervention (Dan. 7:11, 12), when his measured time is complete. Does he pursue his career after the allotted 42 months expire? Where is the accurate chronology of such a supposition?

There is no real ground for Mr. Elliott's note (Sorts Apoc. iii., p. 279, 4th edit.) that the ten horns give their kingdom to the beast, and would afterward desolate it. For, on the contrary, it is the united fury of the beast and the horns that desolates the harlot, Babylon, while it is the beast, never the harlot, that is said to be cast alive into the lake of fire. The description of the final scene in Rev. 19 is quite adverse to the notion of a previous wasting of the strength of the beast. “Unto the end” in Dan. 7:26 cannot therefore mean a gradual but a total destruction. Elsewhere too Mr. E. applies the ten horns desolating the whore to the burning of imperial Rome by the Gothic powers. Where is the consistency or the accuracy here?

Again, it is an oversight to imagine that, after the Lord Jesus destroys the beast and the false prophet by the manifestation of His presence, the reign of peace ensues immediately. There will be a Davidical interval before the Solomonic type applies. And this is what explains Ezek. 38; 39, Zech. 12; 14, and many other scriptures, such as Isa. 29, Mic. 5, &c. This cuts off all the argument derived from Israel's continuance in their land and the subsequent attack of Gog, which has no connection with the judgment of the western little horn. The 75 days after the 1260 of Daniel refer to some of the intervening events after the beast's destruction and before full blessedness. On the other hand, the outpouring of the seventh vial, whether transient or protracted, cannot interfere with the 1260 days, or 42 months of the blasphemous career of the beast. If the chronology of the latter be definite, it is unwarrantable to throw in a cloud of uncertainty, or to defer the end, by an appeal to John's seventh vial before it, or to Daniel's further date of 75 days after it.

I will only add that the presence (παρου■α) of the Lord to receive the saints, raising the dead and changing the living, is outside the events of prophecy, and never determined by a date in scripture. And this fact falls in with the practical importance of leaving the hope of Christ to be an immediate thing for the heart of the believer. Earthly judgments, dealings with Jews and Gentiles, &c., fall within the province of prophecy; and here we find times and seasons. This is confounded by such as misuse the predictions about Israel to hinder the Christian's habitual expectation of Christ. The Revelation shows that, after the heavenly saints are seen on high (which supposes the presence of Christ to take them there), the question of the earth and of Jews and Gentiles begins; and these must both pass through fearful future tribulation before deliverance comes for the righteous on earth by the manifestation of the Lord and His glorified saints from heaven. During this interval the Jewish remnant will be converted, in the midst of their unconverted countrymen in the land, though they will have their repentance deepened when the Lord appears for the discomfiture of their Gentile foes as we see in Zech. 12 If the Lord comes with His saints before every eye, we must leave room for a prior step, considerably before, when He comes for them. What broad truth in the Revelation can be plainer than the presence of the completed company of the heads of the heavenly priesthood above, Rev. 4; 5 (symbolizing under the twenty-four elders the glorified saints), before the great crisis of the seals, trumpets, and vials? Under these we see Jews and Gentiles on earth, some of them faithful and blessed; but no longer the Church or Churches here below after Rev. 3

Chapter 276

To Correspondents

E. J. S. C. can send a copy of what he deems suitable, though of course subject to the Editor's judgment.

M. will find a discussion of the force of χειροτον■ω, and especially in reference to Acts 14, in “Six Lectures on the Church of God” (Broom), pp. 216-221. The real meaning is that Paul and Barnabas chose elders for the disciples in each assembly. Acts 10:41 proves the absurdity of pressing the etymological force of x.

J. S. (Swindon) might find help in “Notes on Daniel” (Morrish), especially pp. 195-204. The north is Syria, and the south is Egypt, whoever may hold these territories in that day. “The king,” or “man of sin,” is distinct from both.

Chapter 277

The Truth and One's Cross

The truth spreads; but it is another thing to take up one's cross. And I observe that, when one does not act according to the truth, there is no solidity: one trifles with religious views. When one follows the truth, difficulties are there and the opposition of the world; that renders us serious. We must know how to give an account of our convictions; then this does not suit the flesh, and the truth must reign in the heart, in order for the victory to be won. Grace does not lend itself to levity and license in the doctrine itself. It is not bursts of steam: the engine must move onwards, and move on with a good deal to be drawn. There is responsibility with respect to oneself, to the Lord's name and His work.

We must take into account this tendency in the present day. We find not a few who like to hear new truth, but who have no idea of walking in the truth in a practical way. We must have patience, we must have a large heart, but a heart which acknowledges nothing but Christ for its end, and follows Him, or, at least, seeks to do so. We lose our time with amateurs. There is real dignity in the truth, which demands from one to respect it in a practical way. But you know it.

In these last days we need firmness, and a large heart which knows how to take forth the precious from the vile. Obedience is firm and humble; grace, meekness, love ought to be there. But the truth needs not man: man needs the truth. Love feels the need of seeking souls; but souls should submit to Christ and acknowledge His grace.

How strikingly the Lord, in John, always places Himself in a position where He receives everything from the Father—■αυτ■υ. We see Deity piercing through the veil, so to speak, in every phrase. We see that He and the Father are one; but He who is one with the Father now received everything from His hands. It is the voice of One who can speak with the Father as a divine person; but He does not say, I will glorify myself; but, on the contrary, “Glorify thou me.” “In three days I will raise it up;” but it is as separating, so to speak, His body from Himself, and speaking of it as of a temple in which He dwelt. His person has come before me of late in a very living way in reading that gospel. Moreover, the gospels have afforded me much food in these times. But how puny we are in comparison with all His grace and all that will reveal itself to us when we shall be with Him in glory May God teach us to take up our cross and follow Him who alone is worthy of it. Some would let go the truth, because it is difficult to reconcile it with charity. Hold it fast: we are sanctified by the truth. Christ Himself is the truth. I admit the difficulty, but grace is sufficient for us. Cordial love to all the brethren; may God keep them and bless them.—Translated from L'Echo.

New York. J. N. D.

Chapter 278

Notes on the Two Epistles to the Thessalonians

First Epistle.

When the Thessalonians received Paul's first epistle, they had not long been converted to the Lord. They then were in all the freshness of Christian life, waiting for the Son of God from heaven, and suffering persecution for His sake. But their faith was mixed with a measure of obscurity. They thought that those from among them who had died would not see the Lord at His coming. To meet their need, the Holy Spirit addresses this epistle to them, in order to establish their faith, to give them light as to the coming of Jesus, and to comfort them in the midst of the persecutions they were going through.

Chapter 1:1. “The church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father.” The Epistles to the Thessalonians present the only instance where we find the expression “in God the Father,” used to indicate the position of a church. In the other epistles, in general, Paul says, “the church of God which is at Corinth,” or “the saints which are at Ephesus,” &c. It is probably because the Thessalonians were recently brought to the faith that Paul speaks of them in this way. Taking, so to speak, this church at its birth, he only sees it in its relationship to God. “One God and Father”—such is the first notion that springs from faith.

“Grace be unto you and peace;” that is to say, May all the energy and riches of that grace in which you stand be displayed in you.

Verse 3. The great Christian principles sheaved themselves in all their force among the Thessalonians; hence it is that we remark so much freshness in their spiritual condition.

“Your work of faith.” See the acts which belong to faith—acts like those which are presented in Heb. 11 and in James 2; the act of Abraham delivering up his son, and that of Rahab preferring Israel to her own country, &c.

Your “labor of love;” that is, the pains one takes in the Lord, the labor one pursues in love, though amidst difficulties.

“Patience of hope;” that is, patient waiting for the promised glory.

“In our Lord Jesus Christ,” translate, “of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In Him is the source of all blessing for our souls; from Him it is that we derive strength and in Him we find that which nourishes the spiritual life.

“In the sight of God and our Father.” In the presence of God we find the exercise of conscience. These two blessings, the maintenance of life in Christ and the exercise of conscience before God, present the two sides of the Christian life. When the soul is in a good state, there is always an exercise of the conscience before God. One may, it is tree, after a period of blessing, walk for some time with a certain measure of life, but without the conscience being much in activity. But if conscience is not reawakened, the time comes when one slips away and declines rapidly.

Verse 4. The great principles of Christianity—faith, hope, and love, which were in activity among the Thessalonians, gave evidence of their election. And this proof is the only practical proof of the election of the saints.

Verse 6. “Followers of us, and of the Lord.” The Thessalonians had a share of the experience of Christ, when He was on earth. Like Him, they possessed the joy of God through the word, and they suffered persecution.

Verse 8. The faith of the Thessalonians had had an echo; it was noised abroad.

Verse 10. Converted through the power of God, the Thessalonians, far from remaining in the world and seeking to reconcile the world and faith, were, on the contrary, formed by that faith to wait for the Son of God from heaven.

Chapter 2:1-12 gives a beautiful instance of the feelings and ways of grace in the conduct and labors of a servant of God.

Verse 7. “As a nurse,” &c.; that is to say, like a mother who nurses her own child. It was in this spirit of tenderness and affection towards the Thessalonians that Paul had labored amongst them.

Verse 13. After having called to remembrance his labors, what care Paul takes to maintain the Thessalonians on the foundation of the word which they had received through his preaching. The apostle puts himself aside and gives thanks that they had received that word, not as the word of man, but as being the word of God. Thus their faith was founded on the word of God, although it was by the ministry of a man that it had been produced and placed upon that foundation.

There are two evidences which show the divine authority of the word of God: works of power, that is to say, miracles; and the effective action which it exercises in the heart. The word of God was accompanied by works of power, when it came unto the Thessalonians through Paul's preaching. (Chap. 1:5.) And now, in his letter, the apostle, to the praise of these believers, proclaims that the same word worked effectually in them.

Verse 14. In consequence of their obedience of faith, the Thessalonians found themselves connected with the churches of Judea, which had preceded them in the same faith (there is one body); and, like those churches, the Thessalonians were suffering persecution from those of their own nation.

Verse 10. “Wrath is come upon them to the uttermost” —upon the Jews. Unbelieving Israel had been visited of God several times by partial chastisements; but now that they had rejected Christ and the Gospel, God subjects them to the full extent of His judgment, a judgment which still continues, and will only be executed in the future trouble of Jacob.

Verses 17-20. Had it not been for the hindrances which had several times prevented him, Paul would have visited the Thessalonians. He greatly wished to see again these believers, the fruit of his labors—they who were the subject of his present joy and his crown of boasting at the moment of the coming of the Lord Jesus. Here then is a new element, with regard to the coming of the Lord: in that glorious day Paul and the Thessalonians would be found together.

There is a difference in the way in which the coming of the Lord is presented in these two instances. Verse 10 of chapter 1. places more particularly before our eyes the coming of the Son, and the joy of the saints, in experiencing the deliverance which He will bring them. There the distinction of the rapture of the saints is not yet brought out; the statement simply presents the coming of the Son from heaven. Verse 19 of the chapter we are reading goes farther; it shows the blessedness of the saints gathered together at the coming of Jesus. The testimony rendered to the Son coming from heaven has enlarged the circle of believers. There are numerous saints: all will be gathered together and happy in that blessed day.

Chapter 3. But there are in the heart of the saints affections which grace produces.

Verses 1-10. Paul, in the midst of the care he devotes to the faith of the believers, is the first to show us how Christian affections can be connected with the cares of the ministry.

Verse 3. “We are appointed thereunto.” It reads better thus: “We are set for this” —this is our lot.

Verse 8. “For now we live.” It is my life, if ye stand firm, ye Thessalonians, says Paul.

Verse 10. “Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face.” This desire was not so soon realized; Paul before that had time to address a second epistle to the Thessalonians; and indeed several years elapsed before he was able to see them again.

Verses 11-13. In this passage, Paul puts the coming of the Lord in connection with every Christian affection. This apostle, who abounded in love towards the saints, desired also that they should themselves walk in love, in order to abide in holiness, and to shine forth in that day. He does not yet state the order of the facts by which this result will be seen, but he mentions the moral truths and the practical grace which prepare it.

“The Lord make you to increase and abound in love to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness.” The love of God possessing the heart is what enables the Christian to walk in holiness. Here we find again the doctrine of John: “He that loveth his brother abideth in the light.” (1 John 2:10.)

It is interesting to see these fundamental elements of faith and of individual blessing forming an integral part of the powerful testimony through which Paul was forming the Church.

“To the end he may stablish your hearts,” &c. It is an actual establishing of the heart, but which will be seen in its results at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ: “We must all be manifested,” &c.

“Before God, even our Father.” Paul always sees the Thessalonians in their relationship to the Father. It does not appear that these believers had as yet got beyond the state of babes in the faith. “I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.” (1 John 2:13.)

The sense of verse 13 is this: May God establish your hearts in holiness [now, by the exercise of love], that ye may be [seen] unblameable in holiness, before our God and Father [at that moment] at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. In this passage, the coming of Jesus is not presented in the act of our gathering together to Him, when we go to meet Him; but in the act of our coming with Him, from the Father's house, after having been in His presence. It is that moment which will show whether we are unblameable.

When Paul, occupied with the coming of Jesus, considers the privilege of faith, he sees the saints all gathered together to the Lord, tasting being with Him the common joys; when he considers the responsibility of the Christian walk, he always sees the appearing of Christ. There can be nothing but joy in our hearts at that blessed moment when we shall go with Jesus into the Father's presence, taking a place which the love of God has given unto us, and which the work of Christ has procured to us. It will be otherwise when we return with Jesus. Without losing our position and our blessedness in Him, we shall nevertheless be in a different scene; we shall have reached that solemn moment when the consequences of our responsibility will be manifested.

Chapter 4:1-12. Here Paul adds several developments to the truths which he mentioned at the close of chapter 3; and first of all on the subject of holiness and love.

Verses 1-8. When Paul was with the Thessalonians, he had shown them the conduct that is pleasing to God. We must preserve or possess our own vessel in sanctification and honor. If any one disregards his brother in overstepping his marriage rights, it is not man only but God whom he disregards: for the Holy Spirit dwells in that brother who has been wronged.

Verse 8. “Despised).” it means— ‘He therefore that [in this] disregards [his brother], disregards not man but God.'

“God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit,” to dwell in us—Christians. Some read you instead of us.

Verses 9-12. Love is of God. By Him we love the children of God—the brethren. And this love, because it has not its source in the sympathies of man, but in God, is a love which is exercised likewise towards all. (Chap. 3:12.) Nevertheless, the object which is here recommended to the attention of the saints is brotherly love. The Thessalonians were not wanting in it. They were taught of God, and did not need to be written to about it. Only it was well that they should abound in it, even more and more, and seek earnestly to manifest to those without a quiet and reputable walk. When love is true, we do not merely confine ourselves to the effusions of brotherly love; we watch also, lest as to things without we should be in fault.

Verses 13-18. Paul presents, at the end of the chapter, fresh developments on the subject of the Lord's coming. He had already given the chief features of that truth; he now returns to it, in order to supply details, and to introduce elements which had not yet found their place in the subject. What he adds as a fresh element is particularly the doctrine of resurrection. Doubtless, the Thessalonians would not have denied that there will be a resurrection from among the dead, but they might not perhaps have been able to apply it to the Lord's coming.

Verse 14. “Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” The departed saints will be found again at the coming of the Lord Jesus. They will reappear on the scene at that blessed moment. You, Thessalonians, you will find again your lost ones! And these are the glorious acts that will then be accomplished: “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.” (Ver. 16, 17.)

Verse 15. “We which are alive and remain.” As regards the coming of the Lord, the saints form two classes. There will be one class composed of those who have fallen asleep through Him, and the other of the saints who will be then on the earth. It is these latter ones that Paul points to, when he says, “We which are alive and remain.” When he was writing this epistle, he considered himself as included in that class.

Verse 16. “A shout” —an assembling shout: κελε■σματι. The word keleusma meant originally the shout raised by the chiefs, on the Greek galleys, to call the men at the time of resuming their work. In our day we mean something similar, when we speak of sounding a call to assemble.

It is interesting to see, in the course of this epistle, the progressive order with which the apostle sets forth the truths which concern the coming of the Lord. Instead of immediately attacking the error which was mixed up with the faith of the Thessalonians, he first takes up the subject at the point where it was known to those believers. He begins by holding this language to them: You are waiting for the Son of God from heaven! This is indeed the privilege of your faith; for it is to this end, in effect that you were converted. (Chap. 1)

Then, by developments which it is precious to know he brings them to those things which necessitate our gathering together in that day. (Chap. 2)

He then fills their hearts with the truth, so that they may be built up in God for that august moment. (Chap. 3)

It is after this that Paul develops the coming of Jesus for the saints, rectifying errors of judgment in the minds of these believers on certain points. (Chap. 4)

Lastly, after having expressed the whole portion of the saints in this event, he mentions the portion of the world. (Chap. 5)

Chapter 5. In the preceding chapters Paul had not pointed out any period of time in connection with the Lord's coming. Here he takes up the question of “times and seasons.” But the moment he touches upon this point, he ceases to say “we.” He says, “they,” “them,” those that are without, from whom he takes great care to distinguish the saints, by pointing to them by these words, “But ye, brethren,” when he again addresses himself to them. “The times,” when it is a question of the Lord's coming, are connected with this world and judgment. The saints have their portion above, outside of the ages. They are taught by the Holy Spirit to be constantly waiting for Jesus.

Verses 2, 3. But the world will know what the day of the Lord is—that day which will bring with it sudden destruction on the earth.

Verses 4, 5. The saints will not be overtaken by that day. Why? Because they are not in darkness. Paul adds, “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day.” Hence, for us, a privilege and a character; the privilege of not being overtaken, as those will be who dwell in darkness, and the character of children of light. There are not in the word mere naked doctrines. The truth always clothes with a certain character those whom it places in the position of privilege.

Verse 10. “That, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him;” whether we belong to the class of the living or to that of the sleepers (the departed saints), when the Lord comes, we shall live together with Him.

Verse 22. “Abstain from all appearance of evil.” It may be translated equally well, “Abstain from every form of wickedness.”

Verse 23. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly.” God is often called “the God of peace” (see Phil. 4, Heb. 13) There is peace where all is perfect. If we live in these relationships where peace exists, we shall walk in holiness.

“Sanctify you wholly.” That is, sanctify you in every point, sanctify the converted man—the whole man. One may, in certain respects, he faithful to God, and in others be faulty. Remark, that Paul does not say, “sanctify perfectly;” but he says, “sanctify wholly,” which expresses another idea. “Your whole spirit and soul and body.” The spirit is that which is most excellent in our moral being, that by which we are placed in relationship with God and distinguished from the brutes. The soul is the seat of the affections; it is a faculty of an inferior order which is to be met with, in a certain measure, even among animals: “all in whose nostrils was the breath of life” — “both men and cattle.” (Gen. 7:22, 23.)

Wishing to show how sanctification takes up a man in his whole being, Paul says, “spirit, soul, and body.” In other passages we read simply “the soul,” when the soul and the spirit are meant or else we read, “the spirit,” when the spirit and the soul are meant. These two spiritual elements are the instruments on which the life acts, which God has given to the believer, and the body is in its turn the instrument which obeys the spirit and the soul.

Verse 24. It is a consolation for us to know that God is faithful; and that if we walk with Him, He will act in our behalf.

Second Epistle.

The summary of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians is this. False teachers had come, taking advantage of the little light which the Thessalonians (as yet young in the faith) possessed on the Lord's return; and, seizing the occasion of their tribulations, they had thrown them into trouble of mind by telling them, “The day is present.” In opposition to this work of the enemy, Paul reassures them by writing to them this Epistle, the object of which is to show them that the day of the Lord was not yet present. These data are the key to the book.

Chapter 1. In this Epistle, as in the preceding one, Paul, in saluting the Church of the Thessalonians, sees it “in God our Father.” (Ver. 1, 2.)

Then, before entering upon the special subject, the apostle considers the circumstances of the Thessalonians; and, on the occasion of their sufferings for the gospel, he recognizes their good estate in Christ, and finds in their tribulations an evidence that they were really in the Christian position. Your faith, he says, increases exceedingly and your love abounds, so that we ourselves make our boast in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions. . . For these tribulations are the portion of those who inherit the kingdom of God. '(Ver. 3-5.)

Then he shows in what an end these tribulations would issue and the change of position they were preparing between the persecuted and the persecutors at the appearing of the Lord Jesus. In that day we shall be at rest while the wicked will find themselves in tribulation. The Lord will manifest against them His retributive justice. This change of condition is not mentioned, as though it were only to be accomplished at the Lord's appearing; but the words by which it is expressed show what

will be the respective condition of saints and unbelievers at that moment. It is already a first intimation, skewing that the Lord will not put the saints into sorrow and trouble when He comes. (Ver. 6-10.)

Verse 5. “A manifest token of the righteous judgment of God.” The persecutions which the Thessalonians endured proved they were “counted worthy of the kingdom of God.” The judgment of God would bring this into evidence, as it would also manifest what had been the conduct of the persecutors.

Verse 8. There are two classes of persons on whom the vengeance of the Lord will come at His appearing: those who knew not God (that is, sinners in general), and those who do not obey the gospel.

Chapter 2. While declaring, in the preceding verses that the Lord, in His day, will manifest His retributive justice, Paul lays down a general truth which governs the subject. Now he enters upon the special point. Is that day come?

Verses 1, 2. Read, “Now we beg you, brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind as that the day of the Lord is present.” The coming of Jesus, and the gathering together of the saints to Him at His coming, is a motive, for the latter, not to be troubled as if they were to be included in the judgments which the day of the Lord would usher in. They will be with Him before that. When He shall be revealed from heaven, the saints will have rest. (Chap. 1:7.) Evidently they will no longer be on this world's scene, for it is not then that there will be rest on the earth.

The seducers told the Thessalonians, “The day is present;” and not, the day is at hand.' The Greek word ■ν■στημι is the same that is used in Rom. 8:37, and 1 Cor. 3:22, to signify “things present,” in contrast with “things to come.” The language of the seducers signified that this day had been already entered on.

Having the declaration that the Lord should come and gather them together to Himself before that day, and being themselves still on earth, the Thessalonians had, by this very fact, a proof that the day was not yet present.

Verses 3, 4. Here is another proof. The one who will be the object of the Lord's judgment in that day was not yet on the scene. As long as, on the one hand, those who are to be on the seat of judgment are not gathered together (the saints above), as long as, on the other hand, the criminal is not brought to the bar, there can be no judgment.

Verse 6. “What withholdeth.” It is not in order to prevent the revelation of the lawless one that God has put a restraint; it is to prevent his being revealed before his time. The adversary is always ready for evil. In the day that God takes away the bridle, Satan will immediately show himself at work to drag men into apostasy.

“That which restrains,” τ■ κατ■χον—a thing. What is it? God has not told us what it is, and this, doubtless, because the thing which restrained then is not that which restrains now. Then it was, in one sense, the Roman empire; as the fathers thought; who Saw in the power of the Roman empire a hindrance to the revelation of the man of sin, and thus prayed for the prosperity of that empire. At present the hindrance is still the existence of the governments established by God in the world;

and God will maintain them as long as there is here below the gathering of His Church. Viewed in this light, the hindrance is, at the bottom, the presence of the Church and of the Holy Spirit on the earth.

The Antichrist will be the head of the ecclesiastical apostasy. He “denieth the Father and the Son.” He “denieth that Jesus is the Christ.” He will be at the same time a civil head, although the first beast (Rev. 13:1-10) will be the one to whom the authority and throne of the dragon will be given. The Antichrist, whose seat appears to be in Judea, will be a kind of lieutenant of the beast. Herod might furnish an example.

Verse 8. “The Lord shall consume with the brightness of his coming.” Mark these last words. The lawless one shall be consumed by the presence of the Lord, manifested at His appearing. This leads us to distinguish between the coming of Jesus and His appearing. The Lord will first come, and then He will manifest Himself—He will appear.

Verse 9. “With all power and signs and lying wonders.” It is very solemn to see the terms used by Peter, in his preaching at Jerusalem (Acts 2:22), to denote the works of power which accompanied the ministry of Jesus, now used by Paul in this epistle to express what the man of sin will do. What seduction there will be then!

Elijah's miracles will also have their counterfeit. The lawless one will cause fire to come down from heaven. And here are signs which, in the days of Elijah, were the touchstone of truth—signs by which one recognized that Jehovah was God, which now will be accomplished in behalf of the beast! (Rev. 13)

Verses 9-12. These verses furnish circumstantial, but most solemn, details concerning the ecclesiastical action which will take place then, and the power of seduction which will be at work among men. The lawless one will come “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.” God will send “strong delusion,” and men will believe what is false, that they all may be judged who have not believed the truth.

Such will be the moral state of things during the great tribulation which is to come on the earth Two passages in the prophets (Jer. 30:7 and Dan. 12:1), as well as two passages in the gospels (Matt. 24:21 and Mark 13:19), tell us of this great tribulation. There we remark that it will fall more especially on the Jews, although it may happen that the Gentiles also shall suffer from it. It is to the sorrows of this crisis that the sufferings of that remnant refer, which we find on the scene in the Psalms. The tribulation will take place during the latter half of the last week mentioned in the book of Daniel (chap. 9.), and will last until the Lord's appearing.

Besides, there are two passages in the Revelation which speak of a general tribulation. The first is Rev. 3:10, where we read these words, “The hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try,” &c. Then we have Rev. 7:9, 17, where we find persons saved out “of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues,” coming out of the great tribulation. From the evidence given by these passages, we find that there will be a general tribulation on the whole earth; then, at the last moment, a more special tribulation for the Jews.

The Church possesses the inestimable privilege of exemption from going through these evil days. Not only will it not be on the earth at the appearing of Jesus (and this is what we have seen at the

beginning of the chapter), but, besides, it will not be there at the time of the great tribulation. The Lord has said, “I also will keep thee out of the hour of temptation.” We shall not therefore pass through that hour.

Verses 13, 14. There are persons who obey not the gospel; and you, Thessalonians, you have obeyed it. But this was before ordained of God, because He has chosen you from the beginning (according to a counsel determined before all ages), in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, which are things accomplished in time.

“Chosen you to salvation” —such is the object which God has purposed to Himself. “In sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” —such is the effect produced in the elect, conformably to God's purpose. “Our gospel” —such is the means used of God to produce that effect.

Chapter 3 contains various exhortations and wishes of Paul in behalf of the Thessalonians. It mentions prayer, obedience, love, and the patience of Christ; also how to treat any walking disorderly; then salutations.

Verse 5. “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of the Christ.” The teachers who told the Thessalonians, ‘the day is present,' had not that patience.

Chapter 279

We Are Wrought for the Glory of God Himself

We are wrought for the glory by God himself; and we have the earnest of the Spirit till we are there, and know that Christ has so entirely overcome death that, if the time was come, we should be transformed into glory without dying at all: mortality would be swallowed up of life. This, through grace, is our portion in the second Adam, through the power of life in which Christ was raised

Chapter 280

What God Is to Us in Christ

There are two ways in which we may look at our relationship to God, and rightly: first, our coming to Him; and, secondly, our souls looking at the dealings of God towards us.

Of Abel, it is said, by the Holy Spirit, God had respect unto his gifts—he came with his needed offering. We are looked at in the Epistle to the Hebrews as drawing near to God. Who could draw near unless he could bring Christ as an offering? We must have that sacrifice in order to bring us near, consequently in that case our relationship to God is measured by our need. We come near because we find we cannot do without it, and we accept that offering as needful to accomplish it.

In another way, the measure of God's blessing we never know until we look on our relationship as measured by God's thoughts of us—by all that which He loves to display when He satisfies His own heart of grace with His ways of sheaving it out. We never enjoy our true blessing unless we see how He thus feels and acts. My mind must rise above what I am to what God is; then it is my mind is formed by the revelation of what God is. To this we are called.

We must come in by our need, as the prodigal did. Man cannot by searching find out God.

There cannot be any knowledge of God in grace by man's competency to know Him. There would be no need of grace if he could know God without it. If I can claim this grace, I do not need grace at all. The way a sinner must come in must be by his need; in that way he learns grace, learns love. But when I have got to God, it is another thing. Then He would form our minds and hearts by what He is Himself. I come as a sinner, because I need it—just as a hungry man needs food; but when brought, I have fellowship with the God who has brought me to Himself. The measure is given in this epistle— “growing up into Christ, in all things.” It is a wonderful thing that God has called us into fellowship with Himself—to have the same thoughts, the same feelings as God, and to have them together! All flows down from Him and we are brought into it by grace, and we enjoy it just so far as we are emptied of self.

First, He makes us partakers of the divine nature—the same nature as Himself. This gives the capacity—I do not say power. The new nature is capacity; the Holy Ghost is power. The new nature is entirely dependent and obedient. The Holy Ghost being there gives me power. In the First Epistle of John this capacity is brought out in a remarkable manner. (Chap. iv.) Every one that loveth is born of God—has this nature; and he that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. Then being partakers of His nature, we, by virtue of the blood being sprinkled on us, have received the Holy Ghost which gives power. In order to communion there must be perfect peace as regards the conscience. There is no communion in conscience. I am alone as to my conscience, and so are you. In order to communion, I must have nothing to settle with conscience: a perfectly purged conscience is the basis of communion. We must know that God has settled the whole question of sin. The moment a child of God fails, communion ceases. The Spirit then becomes a reprover to bring him back; but there is no communion. Communion is the full enjoyment of God and of divine things; when there is nothing to think of as regards oneself. God can now let flow into his heart that

has a conscience purged all that He delights in. He loves to communicate what He Himself has joy in. All that Christ is is for us to enjoy. You are called into this place of Christ Himself—He, the Head of the body; and that the delight God has in Christ should flow down into your heart. How rich then the saint must be! but he is entirely dependent on the Spirit of God for power. There is no power to enjoy anything without Him. There must be an emptying from self to enjoy what He gives. The Spirit of God has no place to act where self and imagination are in exercise. It is not the glory at the end that is so much the object of the believer's thoughts, as the source of it—God Himself. There is more happiness in the fact of being in communion with Him than in the things He communicates: and I say again, because of its importance, a soul cannot have the enjoyment of the things of God without having peace, which is connected with the conscience.

The beginning of this chapter shows how we are presented to God. It is a test, whether the judgment seat brings any terror to your minds. Does it give you any uneasiness? How does the saint get there? Christ comes to fetch him. He said, “I will come again, and receive you unto myself.” Do you ever think of your coming; before the judgment-seat being the effect of His having come to fetch you? Not sent for you, but coming Himself for you, because of His desire to have you with Him where He is, to be fashioned into the same image. You are to bear the image of the heavenly, as you have borne the image of the earthy. When you are there before the judgment-seat, you will be with Him, and like Him: every trace of God's unwearied hand, all His patience, here brought out. We shall be like the One who is the Judge. You will never (I speak, of course, to saints now) be before the judgment-seat of Christ without His coming to fetch you into the same glory in which you are to be. It is the knowledge of grace, or redemption, that leaves me at perfect liberty; and all my life should be a witness to the enjoyment of this blessedness into which we are being brought. The whole of this is through looking at Christ. He is the Firstborn among many brethren in the Father's house. We shall be with Christ and like Christ before God the Father. There will be the blessedness of being with Christ, in the presence of the Father, loved as He is loved. This is what we have in this chapter—set in the presence of God.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We are blessed in Christ, and God is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is “my God and your God,” Christ said. There is no measure of any relationship out of Christ—nothing but condemnation out of Christ. If I have known what it is to be condemned, if I have known what sin is, and how God hates sin, I know there can be no hope for me out of Christ. But God has put away sin. God does not look at my sin, but on Christ. Just as I know my condition in Adam as ruined and condemned, so I know my place in Christ—accepted. How it throws us out of self-importance, self-dependence, self-glorying! We enter into the presence of God in Him who has perfectly glorified God. He is the God as well as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is that wrought in Christ which was hidden from ages and from generations, and He has gone back in virtue of what He has done to vindicate the character of God. We enter into the blessing in Him who has done all. We shall know God in virtue of what the Father bestows upon us. The Father brings many sons unto glory, and brings them back perfect through the work of Christ— “Blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ:” none can be wanting; not an affection of God's delight is wanting. He brings us into His presence without one reserve of the affection that Christ has. We are brought back in Christ. Therefore all that Christ has we have.

How he goes on to unfold it! “That we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” He is not content with a mere general account, but brings it out in detail that we may know it. Suppose I saw a person with an excellent character, and I felt I could never be like that person, I should not be happy. The fact of the excellency of the person, without the possibility of being like him, would make me miserable; and to have him always before me would be all the worse. But in heaven I shall be with Christ, and see Him, without the possibility of being unlike Him. What divine inventiveness of love to make us happy, infinitely happy! What God does, and is, is infinite; and it is so much the better that He will be always above us.

We shall have perfect freedom of intercourse with Him. Moses and Elias were speaking with Him of His death (it may not be then so much of His death), but there will be communion with Him of all that He has.

“Without blame.” Released from all that which would hinder my loving Him: therefore I am made “holy and without blame.” There the proper joy of the heart— “Before him in love,” but no thought of equality; “wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.” Then there is another fact— “Chosen in him before the foundation of the world.” Thus we have His heart set upon us in eternity. The soul knows there is a personal love from God towards himself, and the heart delights in that. So with Christ. In Rev. 2 there is the white stone He will give—proof of personal delight. There is the individual rejoicing in the love of Christ.

How the Spirit seeks to draw out our affections by all this! He tells it all, and would have us know and enjoy it. He would have us know that we are going to heaven, and why. He would form our hearts by what He is doing, while bringing us in, “having predestinated us unto the adoption of children” —still in Christ and with Christ— “by Jesus Christ unto himself.” It is through Him, and in Him, and with Him I find it. It is having my heart fixed on God and the Father, that my affections may be drawn out to Him, and all is because “accepted in the beloved.” God has not blessed angels like this. We are not servants only (we should be servants, to be sure), but we are brought into the confidence of children. Ought not a child to have confidence? We have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry “Abba Father.” Our heart should answer to God's outgoings of heart in grace, and reflect this grace, “to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” He has done it all. Remark here, there is not a word about the inheritance. I dwell on that, as showing how the affections of the saint are formed. If I speak of the inheritance, it is something below me. All prophecy concerns the inheritance. But I am looking at what is above me, and my own blessedness is in what is above me.

Subjects connected with the Church, blessed as they are, as prophecy, &c., are below. He will exercise us about these things, but let me first get my relationship with my Father known. Do not talk of me, of what I have, but what Christ is, and what He has. My soul must enjoy the love that has given it all. The love that has saved is more than the things given. It is of importance to the saints to feel this in the presence of God. It is not mental power, but the heart right—a single eye—that is the great thing. Unless a soul gets its intelligence and direction from God, it never understands the ways and affections of God. His own affections must be known and valued. If I have not known my place in the affections of my Father, I am not in a position to have the communion of His thoughts and purposes. When we were dead in sins, His heart was exercised for us. The sinner is here looked at as dead, not “living” in sin (as in Colossians) and chastening,

&c., for that, but in Ephesians “dead,” not a movement of life, when God comes and creates the blessing according to His own will. When our souls have known the value of Christ's sacrifice bringing us to God, we are seen not in ourselves at all but only in Christ. Then there is perfect rest.

Now afterward he can tell us of the inheritance; and then the prayer is that we may know the hope of His calling (His calling is not the inheritance). He has called us to be “before him in love” (ver. 26); then verse 11 begins about the inheritance. Now I will show you what Christ's inheritance is, and you are to have it too. I must know I am a child and have the thoughts and affections of the child before I can have to do with the inheritance. The end of the matter is that we are brought in to share the inheritance.

How far are your hearts confiding in God's rest only for your wants, &c.? but how far is your confidence and delight in Him for Himself? The heart of the child will delight in the affections of the father. Do your thoughts about God flow from what God has revealed to you of Himself? or are you reasoning about God—will He, or will He not, do it? When it is a settled thing with me that I am a sinner, what have I to reason about? We want to be brought to this simple conviction: I am a sinner; and if I am a sinner, what am I do? Can I look for anything from God on the ground of righteousness? No. When brought to God I am brought to grace. What He is is the spring and source of the whole matter. We are in Christ. It could not be otherwise. We stand there now, by virtue of the atonement, in that position which makes the sin the very necessity for God to bless. Christ died for my sins, and God is “faithful and just to forgive us our sins.”

God is going to take us to heaven, to be happy with Christ there; but He makes us happy out of heaven too. It is a difficult thing, but He does; and He would have the saints living up there where God is, and where we are going, and free from this present evil world.

Chapter 281

What Is the Church and Our Present Duty?

I fully recognize that there was an organization in apostolic and scriptural times, but affirm that what exists now is not the scriptural organization at all, but mere human invention, each sect arranging itself according to its own convenience, so that, as an external body, the Church is ruined; and though much may be enjoyed of what belongs to the Church, I believe from scripture that the ruin is without remedy; that the professing church will be cut off. I believe that there is an external professing Christendom, holding a most important and responsible place, and which will be judged and cut off for its unfaithfulness.

The true body of Christ is not that. It is composed of those who are united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, who, when the professing church is cut off, will have their place with Him in heaven. What is it that confounds these two things when it says, “Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven?” But the Church as we find it in scripture was, externally, one united organized body; that is, Christians were one set of people, known as such on earth; and elders were locally appointed to guide and oversee, at any rate among the Gentile churches, for any formal appointment is not so clear among the Jews. But there was only one Church, one assembly as a whole; and in each place one body with its elders, God's Church in the place; and only one really in the whole world, visibly, externally one. If Paul in his day had addressed an epistle to the assembly of God which is at, there would have been no question as to who would have received it. If he addressed one now, there is no such body to get it. It must go to the dead letter office. Membership of a church is a thing unknown to scripture: what scripture speaks of is a member of Christ, as of one body, a hand, an eye, &c.

It is not that there was no organization at that time. There was, but it was not a number of voluntary self-constituted sects as now. God's organization is lost in the world, supplanted for centuries by Popery. Men have escaped from the horrors of this, each in his own direction: first, in national churches formed by the civil magistrate—a thing unknown till the Reformation; and then, when this was judged unscriptural, diverging into countless sects, each organizing itself in its own way, and having its own members. This kind of organization, which is wholly contradictory of the scriptural one, is what we reject, and we do not pretend to begin and found the Church over again, but believe that scripture gives us full guidance in these last and perilous days, for the position which the general ruin—fully prophesied of in the New Testament—has brought us into, There are saints scattered in all denominations holding the faith of God's elect. But Christ gave Himself to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad. Why are they scattered now? They were to be one that the world might believe. Now they are the scorn of men for their divisions. The Church, as responsible on earth, is in ruins. Its organizations, for there are many, are not God's. Paul could not anywhere call for the elders of the Church, and say to them, “The flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.” Where that exists, I will joyfully fly to submit myself to it. I will not refer to Acts 2 and iv. to show how fearfully we are departed from our first estate, solemn as the testimony is.

When the Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost He formed the Church into one body. This, we know from the Acts, was the promised baptism of the Holy Ghost. And we learn from 1 Cor. 12 that by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body. Now that this body was a public manifested external perfectly united body is manifest from the chapter. One could not say to the other, I have no need of thee; if one member suffered, all did; if one was honored, all rejoiced. The various gifts were various members of this body, the Holy Ghost distributing to every man severally as He would; and there were diversities of administrations, but one Lord. The gifts were set in the Church (the whole body). There were gifts of healing, and tongues, and interpreters of tongues. All this is on earth; it has no sense at all save as applied to the Church on earth. Individuals might pass out, as soldiers who had served their time, others be recruited into it; but it remained the army—the one Church on earth, by one uniting Spirit; the body of Christ as manifested on earth, with apostles, prophets, helps, governments, healings, tongues, in it as a whole, given as the Holy Ghost willed. This is incontrovertible. Whatever may have become of it afterward, this was God's institution, the one manifested body, with its various gifts or members.

If I am told, It will be perfect as the body of Christ in heaven. Be it so; I bless God for it. I believe the end of Eph. 1 shows that it is to be so. But that does not set aside 1 Cor. 12, that it was established as one, known, visible body on earth. If I am told on the other hand, That did not last, it was but a momentary expression of power which passed away: although, as to external unity, this is hardly true until the middle of the third century, when the Novatians sprang up through the dreadful corruptions of the professing body, admitted and described by Cyprian, yet substantially I do not deny it. The apostle says that the mystery of iniquity did already work (2 Thess. 2.); that all sought their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 2) He tells us (Acts 20) that after his decease grievous wolves would enter in, not sparing the flock; and that from within also perverse men would arise to draw away the disciples after them. As long as apostolic energy remained, though the evil was there, it was met and restrained; but after that was gone, after his decease, the evil would break out and in; for he knows no apostolic succession, but that his absence would open the door to the activity of evil. And he tells us prophetically that in the last days perilous times would come—there would be a form of godliness, denying the power thereof: from such he who had an ear to hear was to turn away. But 1 Cor. 12 fully describes the original constitution of the Church as the body of Christ on the earth, God's constitution. If that has passed away, then God's orderly constitution of the body of Christ on earth has passed away through the sin of man. The wolf has come and scattered the sheep, because the shepherds were hirelings. Let no saint fear because of this, for no man can pluck them out of the great Shepherd's hand: but the sheep have been scattered, viewed as a flock. We forget that we have passed through the dark ages of Popery, the corruptest and foulest evil under the name of His Church that ever God's holy eye rested on.

But who can say that we are arrived at the last time? The Apostle John can. Already, he says, there are many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time. So Peter: “The time is come that judgment should begin at the house of God.” Jude tells us he was compelled to write of the evil already crept in, the very persons as a class that would be judged by Christ as corrupters and adversaries when He appeared. In the seven churches we find Christ judging the state into which the churches had got. Has the Church improved since? Let the dark ages tell the tale, and divided infidel bewildered Protestantism! Nor let the Christian be astonished that the failure began so

soon. It has been always so. God's patient love has borne and saved, yea known seven thousand, that one who was faithful enough to go to heaven without death could not find; but the external state of things was under the corruption of evil, and the time come for judgment. The first thing we read of man, after his being placed in paradise, is his fall: no child was born to an innocent Adam. The first thing we read after Noah's altar of thanksgiving is his being drunk. The reins of government entrusted to him were loosed, and scandal and shame and the curse came in. The first thing we have after God spoke out of the midst of the fire to Israel, before Moses came down, is that Israel made the golden calf. The written law never reached man in its own simple character: he had broken it already. The tables were smashed at the foot of the mountain and never came into the camp! How could they come beside a golden calf? The first day of service after their consecration the sons of Aaron offered strange fire, and Aaron never went into the holiest in his robes of glory and beauty! (See Lev. 16) The first son of David turned to idolatry, and the kingdom was ruined. The Gentile king, to whom power was transferred, made his golden image, and got a beast's heart; and the whole times of the Gentiles was characterized by this.

I doubt not that all pictured here—man, law, priesthood, son of David, rising to reign over the Gentiles—will be, or is in some measure, accomplished in the second Adam, the Christ; but that is another matter, most interesting, but which I cannot follow here. As entrusted to man's responsibility, everything set up by God has failed; that is, man has failed in it and failed immediately. The Church as the body of Christ on earth is not an exception; and if in John's time there were many antichrists so that they knew it was the last time, and if Peter declares that the time was come for judgment to begin at the house of God, and Paul that evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse, it was nothing new; it was the sad course of man with everything God had entrusted to him. The first man is the failing man. But that does not alter the fact that God made man upright, nor that the Church as the body of Christ was set up in unity, with all the gifts needed by it, and suited to its good and prosperity, as 1 Cor. 12. bears witness, and that it has sunk down into Popery, divisions, and infidelity. No so-called church can pretend to be the body of Christ now. The one universal Church as described in scripture was then. They have no pretensions to be an unfallen body.

Remark, though we shall come to ministry just now, that in the very full list of gifts for the ministration of all blessing in the body, given in the chapter referred to, neither bishops nor deacons appear. Nor do they in Eph. 4, where the gifts for the permanent edification of the body and perfecting of the saints are spoken of; but of this anon. The Church was established as the body of Christ, one in the earth: no such body or unity can be found now. It is in ruin.

But the Church thus formed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven has another character in scripture—the house or temple of God. And this is presented in a twofold way, which I beg my reader to remark: one infallibly secure—Christ's own work not yet finished; the other connected with man's responsibility—a present thing on earth.

See what the word of God says on the subject. “Thou art Peter [a stone], and on this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Here we have Christ building, and no power of Satan shall hinder His building it up to completion. In this building Christ is the builder, and in the work no human instrumentality is ever spoken of. Peter tells us, “Unto whom coming, as unto a living stone, ye also as living stones are built up.” Men may minister the word,

but the work is Christ's (man disappears); “unto whom coming ye are built up.” The work of building is not man's, and the building is not finished yet. Living stones may be added from day to day till the top-stone is laid on. This in a certain sense is invisible, an individual work to produce a temple at the end. So Paul: “In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” It grows up by grace—it is not finished. The apostles and prophets of the New Testament were laid as the foundation, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone. The apostles are stones, not workmen.

But in 1 Cor. 3 we have another aspect of the house “As a wise master-builder,” says the apostle, “I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon; but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon.” Here man is builder, and man's responsibility immediately comes in. We have a visible external building: “Ye are God's building;” but, though such, man was the builder, and he might build in gold, silver, precious stones. All well; but he might build in wood, hay, stubble, and his work be good for nothing, and be all burnt up and destroyed. Three cases are supposed here. The first where the builder and his work are good: both of course are owned. Secondly, where the workman is true, but the work bad: he is saved and his work destroyed. Thirdly, there is a corrupter: he is destroyed himself, by God, as evil. Here I have not all perfect, fitly framed together, growing to an holy temple, Christ being the builder; but men the builders, and a present building seen on earth, called God's building, but liable to have all sorts of stuff built in, yea, to be corrupted by those who intend evil. Has nothing of this happened? I do not doubt Christ will have in the end His holy temple; that what He builds will never be thrown down, but grow to an holy temple; that it is in this character as invisible—not Church, indeed, as a present ordered thing, for it is not yet complete, but a work to form it such going on, the living stones added—growing up, in spite of the gates of hell, to be a holy temple, I do not deny. In that temple I trust I am, by grace, a stone, and I trust our critics are too.

But what we have to deal with responsibly—what occupies us now—is what man has built; not the invisible Church which Christ builds (that is sure to be perfect); but what men, since Paul the wise master-builder, have built or even corrupted, what you are who call yourselves the Church of England, or the Presbyterians, or the Independents, or the Wesleyans, or the Baptists, who are all very visible indeed. Is your building such as a responsible man down here can own? I do not doubt for a moment there are living stones in all of them, whom Christ will have in His temple, and has placed there already—beloved brethren, whom I own cordially and joyfully as such; members of that Church which Christ loved, and for which He gave Himself, and whom, as part of it, He will present to Himself glorious. I rejoice with all my heart to think so, and am assured it is so. But I do distinguish between you and what Christ is building for final presentation to Himself; and my responsibility attaches, as to present church questions, not to my relationship to the invisible Church, but how far the word permits me to own you, and the various sects which have split off from you, who are not, and do not pretend to be, that invisible Church.

And here another part of scripture comes in. If corruption has set in, as we have seen it had in the apostles' days, and if the state of the Church has to be judged, and every one that has an ear is to hear what the Spirit says to him, have we no scriptural directions for such a time? We have. 2 Timothy treats of this time of confusion and evil, as 1 Timothy of the order of the visible Church. In 2 Tim. 2 I read, “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.” This supposes, in a great measure, at any rate, that the true Church, the members of

Christ, are invisible. The Lord knows them. It was not so originally. In the beginning, “the Lord added to the church [the assembly] such as should be saved.” They are publicly manifested as added to the Christian Church, the assembly at Jerusalem. Now we read, “The Lord knoweth them that are his.” We admit, then, the invisibility of, at any rate, many members of Christ. The Lord knows them. But is that all? No, we have to do with the visible profession, and the Spirit of God continues, “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” Whatever is iniquity I must depart from, and surely not least in the house of God. That is the responsible side of the seal. With the Lord's knowing them that are His I can no further meddle than to bow to it as a truth. But the second part directs me as to my path in the visible Church—those who name the name of the Lord—I am to depart from iniquity. But there is, further, what I may call ecclesiastical direction. In a great house I am to expect vessels to dishonor, and I am to purge myself from them, that I may be a vessel to honor, fit for the Master's use. I am to make the difference in the great house between one vessel and another, and follow faith, charity, patience, with those who call upon the name of the Lord out of a pure heart. Thus, when the Church is become like a great house, I am to act individually, as to avoiding evil, and seek the pure in heart to walk with them. And, in the third chapter, where there is the form of piety, denying the power, I am told “from such turn away.”

In vain you tell me I am not to judge. I am called on to hear what the Spirit says to the churches, bound to depart from iniquity, bound to purge myself from the evil vessels, bound to turn away from the form of piety in the professing body where the power is not. And though I admit that judging individual motives is condemned, yet I must judge evil for my own walk, or I cannot turn away from it. If Popery is evil, I turn away; I do not judge all that are in it; I dare say some may go to heaven. I do not doubt many will from Protestant sects; but if they are unscriptural, I turn away from them.

But it is really a very evil principle to say, in an absolute way, we cannot know who are Christians. Many we may not know from the darkness and confusion which exists, and we must leave it to the judgment of God who does; but to preclude knowing any as such is a disastrous principle, because I cannot love as my brethren those whom I do not recognize as such. “By this,” says the Lord, “shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” And they tell me I cannot know who are to be thus loved! If so, the testing proof of being Christ's disciple is gone. Where would family affection be, if we were to tell our children they could not tell who were their brothers and sisters? But this in itself shows the total difference between the present state of things and the apostolic state sanctioned of God. There, love of the brethren, as a distinct set of people, is given as a test of Christianity (see John's epistles), as much as practical obedience and righteousness. By this “we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” (1 John 3:14, so 10 and 16.) “He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” It was not all the world, but a known set of people. An epistle is commanded to “be read to all the holy brethren.” They were to greet one another with a holy kiss. So “all the saints salute you.”

False brethren soon crept in unawares; but there were true ones among whom to creep unawares. Some apostatized and left also, that it might be made manifest they were not all of its. They were gathered in every place into an assembly, so that they could put a wicked person out from among them. No one can read the New Testament without seeing that these were a well-known, distinct class of persons, known to each other, known as brethren; and he who belonged to them in one place, belonged to them in all—took a letter of commendation as such if he went where he was

unknown; among whom, as contrasted with the world, brotherly love was to continue. To say we cannot know each other, even if some are hidden, is to deny all the Christian affections to which we are bound, and to say that the whole condition of Christianity has entirely and fatally changed. There was a company of people, “their own company,” who met as a united body in the whole world, believers in Christ, though false brethren might creep in. The internal power of their unity was the Holy Ghost; it was the unity of the Spirit—one Spirit and one body. The symbol and external center of unity was the Lord's Supper: we are all one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread. (1 Cor. 10)

Now what is the position of the English Establishment, Dissenters, and the so-called Plymouth Brethren as to this? An assailant says the two former take people on their profession, and that be does not know an instance where a discovered adulterer or fraudulent person has been permitted to go. But this is a very false representation of the theory of the English Establishment. They do—what they accuse the Brethren of—confound the external professing body and the invisible Church in the worst way. They teach (and so does even the colonial system, though circumstances modify the state of things), that “in baptism I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” These members of Christ, who have received, we are told, remission of sins by spiritual regeneration, are to be brought by their godfathers and godmothers to the bishop to be confirmed, so soon as they can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and have learned what is briefly set forth in the Church Catechism. That is, they are members of Christ and children of God by baptism, and, as such, being confirmed, they are to take the Lord's Supper. They are members of Christ by baptism to start with, when they know nothing about it, and are carried on to the sacrament when they have had adequate instruction. And in theory all the population are supposed to belong to it, passed over to it at the Reformation from Popery, for a long time were forced to be of it, and if they are not, it is by their own act, and reckoned to be in schism and dissent. The way of being a member of Christ is not by faith and the Holy Ghost, not by profession, but by a sacrament!

To talk of discovered adulterers, feeble and delicate as to evil as is such a precaution, is nothing to the purpose. They are made members of Christ, children of God, members of what is called the Church of England, not by faith as scripture teaches as to being a child of God, not by the baptism of the Holy Ghost as scripture teaches as to members of Christ, but by a sacrament. Discovered or undiscovered, they are members of Christ without any professed faith of their own. The truth is, all the reformers held baptismal regeneration (falsely so called, for regeneration is not so used in scripture)—English, Lutheran, Presbyterians, much as the last kick against the proofs of it, which are perfectly clear both in Calvin and their own symbolical books. Scottish, Dutch, and others, all have the doctrine in their documents. The only difference is that the Presbyterians hold that the invisible grace is not so absolutely tied to the sign as to be true of any but the elect. But this only proves the more they do hold it to be so conferred where it is effectual. Luther insists on it for all in his catechism, and the English one in the worst terms possible.

Further, as distinguished from this, the gathering companies of believers is nothing new. This all Dissenters profess to do. They may have thrown themselves into the world and politics more rabidly than the Establishment, and in a large measure fallen into rationalism; but they profess to make churches of believers (unless we except the Wesleyans, who have a peculiar polity of their own). But they make churches to be voluntary associations, of which so-called churches those

who associate are members—a thing wholly unknown to scripture. A member of a church is a thing unknown to scripture. All Christians are members of Christ, and there can be no other membership. We, all who have the Spirit of Christ, are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Baptism even as a figure has nothing to do with giving life, or membership. It is baptism to the death of Christ for one previously a child of sinful Adam. The Lord's supper is (besides other precious truths) the expression of the unity of the body of Christ. Every saint is a member of that. This is the ground “Brethren” meet on, supposing of course that the person is not justly subject to discipline. The Establishment makes all the nation (if it can) members of Christ by baptism when infants. Dissenters make members of churches by voluntary association with various particular conditions.

“Brethren” recognize the one body of Christ formed by the Holy Ghost, and meet to break bread on that ground, owning no membership but that of Christ, believing that there are many in all sects who hold the doctrine of Christ, but that they meet, the national churches by a sacramental process for all the world, the Dissenters as voluntary members of particular churches formed by themselves; neither of which systems is in scripture. “Brethren” do not confound the outward professing church and that which Christ will present to Himself: the former will be judged and cut off, the latter be with Christ in heaven. But they see in scripture one recognized body on the earth. They see all to be in ruins; that on the principles of existing professing bodies, they must continue in the Establishment, which is false in all its principles, or join one sect and not be of another—be a member of it, which is not in scripture: that the state of things is a state of ruin, but that God has provided for it in His word; and that they can meet on the ground of the unity of the body of Christ, if only two or three, and find Christ in their midst according to His promise; glad to see any child of God who is walking godlily, who calls on the name of the Lord out of a pure heart. They cannot compel unity, but they can act on it. God alone, they well know, by making Christians unworldly and Christ precious and all to them, can bring it about.

Chapter 282

What Is the Meaning of the Greek Translated “to Worship"?

A Correspondent sends a paper which censures J. N. D.'s translation on the ground that “when direct to God the Father, in every instance, he has the word ‘worship' in his New Translation;” “in every instance where the Lord Jesus is worshipped, he has used the word homage.'“ This is supposed to “need no comment.” Nevertheless, comment is added; namely, that our Lord Jesus is looked upon in a subordinate or lower sense than God the Father; especially as where the creature is in question, the translator, “in nearly every instance, has used the word ‘homage.'“

Such insinuations it would be almost as foolish to discuss as it was wrong to feel and express them. For in these evil days, I do not wonder at any attacks on that which is good. But it is impossible to conceive remarks more gratuitous than such criticism. Two qualities combined can alone account for them—malice and ignorance, equally intense and without excuse.

Matt. 4:10, the first instance given in the first list, refutes the calumny. The citation in answer to the devil is translated, “Thou shalt do homage to the Lord thy God,” &c. Now here it is a question of adoration direct to God the Father; yet Mr. D. has “do homage.” This is the opening proof that “in every instance” he has the word “worship” when direct to God the Father Honesty may be prejudiced, but no honest man that understands the words in English, not to speak of Greek, can avoid seeing that the charge is false; and that the inculpated version gives πρ. the sense of doing “homage” where God is distinctly and exclusively spoken of.

If the first instance proves exactly the contrary of what it was intended to illustrate, the second (Matt. 15:9) will sound quite as strange to any one who knows a word of the Greek Testament. The Englishman's Greek Concordance is referred to at the end of the second list; but this too, of course, rises up to rebuke this false witness. There is no form whatever of προσκυν■ω in the verse. That which answers to “worship” here is a wholly different word, σ■βονται.

The third (Luke 4:8) is the passage parallel to Matt. 4:10, and simply repeats that which exposes not Mr. D., but his adversary.

John 4 gives several cases where all agree in translating,πρ. “worship;” and so of course Acts 8:27, and 24:11.

The next cases repeat old and add new blunders, by successive texts where πρ. does not occur! In Acts 16:14 it is σεβομ■νη, in chapter 17:25 it is θεραπε■εται, in chapter 18:13 it is σ■βεσθαι, and in chapter 24:14 it is λατρε■ω (and similarly in Heb. 10:2). This may suffice for the first list.

But perhaps as glaring a proof as can be of total absence of candor appears in the removal of Rev. 4:10 and 5:14 from their true place in the first list in order to eke out a fresh calumny in the second. For it is evident that He who sits on the throne in Rev. 4; 5, is not the Son as such in contradistinction from the Father, but expressly the Lord God Almighty, from whose right hand the Lamb, in chapter v., takes the sealed book. Yet these are the texts with which the unworthy effort is wound up to make it appear that in every instance where the Lord Jesus is worshipped, J. N. D.

has used the word “homage;” and in every instance where God is worshipped, he has retained the word “worship!” The truth is that in the two scenes of heavenly adoration in Rev. 4; 5 Mr. D. gives “homage” and not worship. Yet none but the most ignorant can deny that Almighty God as such is the object, in Rev. 4 alone, and in Rev. 5 conjointly with the Lamb (if we receive the correct critical text, which Mr. D. does).

Lastly, to show the of the third list (which is intended to prove that Mr. D. always uses “homage” where the creature is the object), it is enough to state that Rev. 19:10 is by folly or fraud left out here, though twice inserted in the first list. Thus the use and nonuse is doubly false. For Mr. D.'s version of that verse gives the term “worship” (with an asterisk “Or, ‘do him homage") where the creature or angel is concerned; and it says “worship God” (without giving the alternative of homage) where He is named. There is the usual heap of mistakes in this list besides; but we may safely refrain from further exposure. I have given enough to demonstrate that all three lists are untrustworthy; and I doubt that any amount of ignorance could have so erred without deliberate malice.

Any man who, knowing J. N. D., or having read his writings, can let party-spirit impute to him a lowering of the Lord Jesus to the condition of the creature, or a denial of divine honor and adoration equally with the Father, is beyond the reach of conviction by evidence. What I have said will satisfy others that his detractors are no way scrupulous. Why for instance does the second list leave out J. N. D.'s version of Heb. 1:6? There it is not doing homage, but worship; yet it is to the Son, and not to the Father.

The commonest of Greek and English Lexicons to the New Testament, such as Rose's Parkhurst, is clear that προσκυν■ω expresses homage whether civil or religious (i.e., reverence, and worship). The following note Mr. R. gives from Dr. J. P. Smith's Scripture Testimony to the Messiah (2. p. 270): “This word occurs sixty times in the New Testament. Two, without controversy, denote civil homage (Matt. 18:26; Rev. 3:9); fifteen refer to idolatrous rites (John 4:22; Acts 7:42 [?], 43; Rev. 9:10 [? 20]; 13:4, 8, 12, 15; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 19:20; 20:4); three, to mistaken and disapprove I homage to creatures (Acts 10:25; Rev. 19:10; 22:8); about twenty-five clearly respect the homage due to the most high God; and the remainder relate to acts of homage to Jesus Christ. Of these (Matt. 2:2, 8, 11; 8:2; 9:18; ~ 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; ~28: 9, 4'17 Mark 5:6; 6:51 [? 15:19]; Luke 5 [? 4.] 8 [24:52]), though some of them (marked~) denote a very deep and awful reverence, it cannot be said that any necessarily denote the worship due to God. But John 20:28 and Heb. 1:6, especially the last, against which no objection can be raised, arc of a different order.” — Note from the ed. of 1829. There must be some oversight as elsewhere in citing John 20:28, for the word is not there, though Thomas' emphatic address did pay divine honor to the Lord. But the passage demonstrates the absurdity of such as limit πρ. to divine worship. Mr. D.'s version very properly applies it in both senses to our Lord. So Dean Alford, Mr. T. S. Green, Dr. G. Campbell (on the Gospels), Doddridge, and (one may say) every intelligent Christian.

What crowns the character of the present assault is the fact that, in a recent version of the New Testament by a learned and able Unitarian (Mr. S. Sharpe), πρ. is habitually, indeed invariably, translated “worship,” applied to God, our Lord, and the creature, whether in civil reverence or in religious worship. On the other hand I am not aware of a single orthodox Christian of competent biblical knowledge who would not in the main support the discriminating value given to πρ. in J. N.

D.'s version as against either the Authorized Version or Mr. Sharpe. We might generally translate προσκυνεω as “doing homage;” because this would embrace reverence both civil and religious. But it is an error in the present usage of the English language to translate it always as “worship,” because in perhaps a majority of its occurrences in the New Testament this is not the true sense. The principle therefore on which Mr. D.'s version goes is undoubtedly sound, whereas the Authorized Version (perhaps through some change in the use of the verb “worship” as compared with its wider bearing two or three hundred years ago) is incorrect. The substantive and adjective are still applied as a title of respect to certain authorities. But the usage of the verb, as it often occurs in the New Testament, is now obsolete.

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